ROOPA-LEKHA

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Illustrated Journal of Indian arts & crafts

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CONTENTS

				Pages
1.	Views on Art	... by	Kamaladevi Chattopadhayay.	1
2.	Indian Sculpture	... „	D. P. Roy Choudhury.	11
3.	Garhwal School of Painting	... „	Mukandi Lal.	17
4.	Manaku, The Pahari Painter.	... „	Nanalal C. Mehta.	34
5.	Madhava Menon, The Painter from Kerala.	... „	Krishna Chaitanya.	37
6.	Scheme for Development of Indian Art.	... „	Jagdish Chandra Khanna.	42
7.	Reviews : Paintings of Ishwar Dass	... „	Krishna Chaitanya.	50
	NOTES & NEWS :			51 to 60

(i) Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul.
(ii) Afghanistan Arts Association.
(iii) Art Conference at Calcutta.
(iv) Periodical Art Exhibitions.
(v) Camera Society, Delhi.

COLOUR PLATES

1.	White Flower	... by	D. K. Dev Barma	Frontispiece	
2.	Malabar Belle	... „	B. N. Jijja	Facing page	42
3.	Festival at the Sea	... „	K. Srinivasalu.	„ „	50

ILLUSTRATIONS

1.	The Elephant (Konarak)	Plate	2	...	„	12
2.	The Konarak Horse	Plate	3	...	„	13
3.	The Chariot (Konarak)	„	1	...	„	14
4.	"Nataraja"	„	4	...	„	15
5.	"Rape of the Yadav Women	„	9	... by Chaitu	„	18
6.	Camel Fight.	„	7			
7.	"Prince Suleman Shikoh"	„	16	„ Shiv Ram.	„	19
8.	Blind Man's Bluff	„	8	... „ Manaku.	„	24
9.	Blind Man's Bluff (Sketch)	„	10	... „ Mola Ram.	„	
10.	Response to Rukmani's message		12	... „ Mola Ram.	„	25
11.	Nursing Avatar.	„	15	... „ Mola Ram.	„	
12.	"Blind Man's Bluff.	„	11	... „ Mola Ram.	„	30
13.	"Welcoming the Rains"	„	13	... „ Mola Ram.	„	
14.	"Dampati"	„	14	... „ Mola Ram.	„	31
15.	"Govardhan Dharan"	„	17	... „ Jwala Ram.	„	
16.	'Filling the Pitcher".	„		... „ Madhava Menon	„	38
17.	"Deer in the Park".	„	2	... „ Madhava Menon	„	
18.	"Bird on the Bough"	„	1	... „ Madhava Menon	„	39
19.	"Bamboo Bush"	„	4	... „ Madhava Menon	„	
20.	"The Spirit Nagalinga flower"	„	3	... „ Madhava Menon	„	40
21.	"White Lotus"	„		... „ Madhava Menon	„	41
22.	"Homeward Bound"	„	5	... „ Madhava Menon	„	

23.	Caravan Music.	... by	V. Masoji.	Facing page	46
24.	Alone.	... "	Ishwar Dass	"	47
25.	Female Head	... "	Poet Rabindranath Tagore	"	48
26.	The Dancers	... "	Sushil Sarkar.		
27.	Labourers	... "	Satyen Ghosal.	"	49
28.	Indian Games	... "	Miss S. S. Anandkar		
29.	"Cycle of Life"	... "	Late Sarada Ukil	"	52
30.	"Gossip".	... "	Susil Sen		
31.	"Deepavali" (KASHMIR)	... "	Binode Mukherji.		
32.	A Landscape. (KASHMIR)	... "	S. H. Raza.	"	53
33.	Bamboo Bush. (KASHMIR)	... "	Gopal Ghose.		
34.	Two Sisters.	... "	Anil Roy Choudhury.		
35.	"Lakshmi"	... "	Sunil Pal.	"	54
36.	Village Corner.	... "	Nagen Bhattacharyya.		
37.	Landscape.	... "	N. S. Bendre.	"	55
38.	Women opening the Door.	... "	Nandalal Bose		
39.	" Expectation "	... "	B. N. Jijja.		
40.	Rajgir.	... "	Hira Chand Duggar.	"	56
41.	Class in Shalbani.	... "	Kumaril Swami.		
42.	His Pet	... "	S. J. Sampat.	"	57
43.	" Village Puja "	... "	Sailoz Mukherzea.		
44.	Bulls' Day in Nasik.	... "	Kiron Moy Dhar.	"	58
45.	H. R. H. Shah Wali Khan, etc.				
46.	Group of Afghanistan Artists Association.	... "		"	59

VIEWS ON ART

BY

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHAYAY

ART in the ancient human society was a social expression. It expressed, not the mood or the idiosyncrasy of an individual but rather the social consciousness of the community as a whole. Art was not a luxury, an exclusive commodity on sale to become the sole possession of the highest bidder, but the normal everyday detail of life. The artist was not an alien being, looked upon as a freak, living outside the pale of the common herd, employing a strange language and flaunting a mode of living in deliberate defiance of the normal accepted social code and pattern, as artists like doing these days. The artist of those days was a social fellow-being, for the entire community lived in close touch with the beauty which became woven into every social commodity, be it the humblest, the commonest article, the tiniest detail; each was elaborated with loving and aesthetic precision. In fact, every man and woman was an artist in his or her own way, and each created out of the joy of giving shape and form to dreams and inspirations. The woman's deft fingers as she drew designs in white or coloured powder in her yard, the dishes she cooked, the flowers she strung, expressed the innate creative genius. Every craftsman was an artist; every cloth he wove, every image he chiselled, every piece of pottery he moulded, was a perfection of colour, harmony and rhythmic balance. A wealth of care and imagination went into the making of the most mundane and insignificant of articles, be it a churner, a rolling pin or a kitchen mat. Art meant loveliness of form, balance and proportion pervading every single detail. One lived, breathed and fed upon art, for art was an essential part of life, more, a necessity like bread and love and home. Moreover all the arts rubbed shoulders and formed a common fraternity. Their greatness

lay in being the simple and loving expression of a common humanity and its life. Big works of art, such as public buildings, places of worship, ornamental objects for beautifying the city, were a community responsibility in the execution of which it participated and co-operated, making each its collective expression.

But life was simpler then. It revolved chiefly round small-community self-sufficiency economy, when needs were simpler, living harder, and the complexities of the present-day economy had not yet come with their varied sophistications. The artist then held a fairly defined place in society for art was still regarded as a practical craft — something essential to the community needs and satisfied that urge, and not as a leisure hour hobby of the rich who alone can sport it today as a privilege.

But competitive society altered all that. It isolated the artist throwing him upon himself, facing the public, not one of its service-men. Gradually he found himself become a tradesman selling his works as wares to those who could afford to buy them. He connoted for the first time a private luxury article with no community or social importance, and more or less having to cater to the tastes of the patron or starve. This has naturally not only supressed the creative freedom of the artist but has also served to isolate him gradually from the people, which means also isolation from reality. The idiosyncrasies of cultural expressions the frustrated spirit of the artist resorts to, and which decadent society sometimes welcomes for its sheer novelty, are a symptom of the hiatus between community life and its true expression. It is an art of despair, not life which society must take as a serious warning. The evidences of waste and frustration are as obvious in the cultural field today as in the material. Just as the quantity of material production is determined by the necessities of private profit

and not by the volume of human needs, similarly the nature and strength of cultural production is equally determined by financial factors, whether in the matter of the human element or formal technique. Even where a higher standard may be attained, the character of culture is debased in a society run under the influence of monopoly interests. In such a society opportunities are limited to the few; which means that a large part of society is prevented from giving its best to society. As it has been said, the Promethean fire is being used to stoke up the furnaces of private profit. Intellectual workers in all fields should beware of this frustration of their powers, the falsification of values and the absence of a unifying synthetic spirit. One can only quote the indictment of capitalism by the Poet that "It has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the philosopher, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the scientist, into paid wage labourers."

At no time was art so isolated and therefore shorn of its real vitality as in recent decades, especially after the advent of modern industrialisation. Gradually, the isolation spread. Paintings moved away from public walls, statues from monuments and places of public worship to private mansions, to be retransformed into individual portraits and figures of private patrons, who now secured for exclusive use what was for centuries public property. Slowly and inevitably public buildings and monuments lost touch with art and became loud symbols of wealth. The new society had no taste and little of community conciousness, for it symbolised individual success, the man who had won the race in commercial competition leaving the others behind, perhaps rudely pushing them back and even trampling on them. Competitive society has little time or mind for aesthetic pursuits. Today where art objects and their patronage have become a mark of wealth, usually experts are hired to deal with them. For such objects too are an investment and often

represent wealth that escapes State taxes. It is rarely, and more by accident, that money goes hand in hand with love of beauty.

It was but natural that this degradation of art should lead to the banishment of the artist from the common fold, label his natural instinct as a strange freak that troubles the emotions of a few who henceforth would be best outside the high fence of "respectability", to dwell on cagey fringes to be only tolerated, misunderstood, for ever suspect, despised, and, worst of all, mostly ignored. "The history of Art in the nineteenth century", writes Roger Fry, "is the history of a band of heroic Ishmaelites, with no secure place in the social system, with nothing to support them in the unequal struggle but the dim sense of a new idea, the idea of the freedom of art from all trammels and tyrannies ...."

Art cannot live by the artist working for another for the sake of patronage. Art expression has to be allowed to find its own natural channels by the artist working under the pressure of his creative urge. It is only in this way that art can serve humanity, for then alone can it fulfil its function. It is when such natural expression is thwarted that artists, to record their protest against a blind society and age, indulge in excesses, freakish clothes, daring unconventionality, and the like. They are but pitiful devices the artist weave in their solitude, when relegated to the outer margins of life.

Artists are after all only men and members of society, open to the influences of the society in which they live; and it is their ideas, feelings and attitude towards the problems of life which really go into the works they create. An artist does not cease to be a man and become a productive machine, functioning detached from the vortex of human affairs. Therefore all art expressions have to be considered in human and social terms. The artist inevitably projects into his creations

his own personality with varying degrees of directness or indirectness, which is but the sum total of his attitude towards life itself. The subject of his treatment is no accident but an indication of his mental outlook and his emotional affinities, which are but his sociological expressions. Therefore to talk of art as an isolated factor entirely cut off from the other serious activities of life, is unreal. If art is as vital as we feel it is, then it is bound to be closely related to all those other factors which are important in our life.

We realise that every human being is a product of the society and its environment. The form and content of cultural expression of any given period can therefore be explained only in social terms, whether that expression be literary, musical or pictorial. In other words the creative force takes shape with the clicking of two currents, the individual trends and the social. The dynamic is lent to the situation by the powerful impact of these two on one another.

The few artists who have refused to be isolated, and maintained their links with the people and their sensitiveness to reality, have not needed to resort to any of the evasions. For inevitably as the struggle of the social forces grows more dominant, those who slip behind the curtain of isolation instead of sharing in the most dynamic and important of functions — the social revolution society goes through from time to time — are bound to devise or resort to an escape of mechanism of some kind, which is but the subconscious urge in him to find a compensation for losing the reality. One of the greatest services rendered by the Mexican Revolution to the painters, was to break through the vicious circle of private patronage and establish State patronage, to enable the artists to maintain their links with the community and not only with individuals who patronise.

Therefore art can only have meaning and influence where it is vitally linked to the normal currents of the social life of the period and is able to assume a clearly defined collective function. Otherwise it remains outside of the social hum and web. The existing gap can only be bridged by restoring beauty to its central pivotal place, whereby it endows the common threads of daily existence and the mundane details of ordinary life with uniqueness and originality. One sees today attempts to bring art to the common man by indulging in loose phrases like "Proletarian Art". This merely betrays a mind incapable of thought or action free from sectarian bias. For such symbolic slogans as "Proletarian Art" inject once more into a community-possession the sectarian virus and start just another process of poisoning instead of pumping out the existing sectarianism, and restoring to the entire community its precious lost legacy.

Just as a social revolutionary change has to come out of the giant stirrings of the entire strata that have been made inane and dumb through centuries of suppression, so, too, its varied expressions must surge up from its moving breast. It is not to be imposed from above as a gift of benevolence or political act. It is not uncommon to find cultural expressions being exploited for sectarian and factional propoganda in the name of the people, while in reality toeing what is called the "Party line". It is not an attempt to rouse and organise the burning lava sizzling in the breasts of the vast masses, but just to bolster up a certain political group or party through the negative process of undermining the existing bourgeois standards. The aim should be to create conditions for the masses to fashion their own instrument of expression. It has to be the manifestation of life, not of a political idea or party organ. For we must realise the fundamental fact that art is the appeal to the instinct of communion, the indivisible unity of mankind. We recognise each other with a growing awareness of our

oneness by the echoes beauty awakens in us. "Intuition is only a flame spurting forth at the point of contact of an infinity of previous analysis and of accumulated reasoning........... There is no hero of art who is not at the same time a hero of knowledge and of the human heart," so says Elie Faure, the French poet and art critic. Art enables man to penetrate deeper than science. Within the heart of the artist are the earth, the vast spaces, all that lives and moves, even the tissues of the stone which to the naked eye seems inert. How much more truly and intensely he must feel the emotions, the passions, the joys, and hopes, the despairs and sorrows, of those made in his own image. The artist is not sufficient unto himself—if he believes that he is no artist. The very language an artist employs is universal. It overleaps all narrow boundaries and divisions. Art enables man to penetrate into the very core of existence, and pierce the social structure. Thus can man see himself as well as the entire social fabric he has woven, even as a woodland mirrored in a clear surface of water, when all the intricacies of foliage are disentangled and finely posed. He who wants to create cannot do so unless he feels within himself all the flow and pattern of the social life; is consumed by the flames raging in the hearts of all men, those who have passed beyond and those yet to draw their breath; is able to capture abstract ideals and raise them to the plane of laws which determine the everyday relationship of man to man. It is this quality alone which enables art to make of life a perfect whole. For each fragment of the work, because it is adapted to the entire whole, however humble in itself, extends as though in silent echoes and invisible strands, throughout the deepened breadth, to weave the complete pattern. Therefore a great work of art lives even in the least of its fragments.

Culture is an imaginative reflection of life, and since life is not static, adhering to realism in art does not mean photographic naturalism;

for that would not reflect the fundamental realities of life which do not come to the surface except through scientific penetration and historical perspective. A rubber-stamp realism conveys no impression of either the weight of the past or the possibilities of the future or the dynamics at work beneath the surface of life. For the one who creates has to reveal not a static present but the future which is already getting shaped in the vortex of the present currents. A work of art is true in so far as it not only reflects faithfully the thoughts and feelings of the time but also survives the test of practical experience. For a theory or idea is true only in so far as it can be made meaningful in action.

If art is to give expression to each particular age, it must break loose from the frontiers of a bygone age and shake off the limitations of the old imaginative and mental make-up. Life is a continuous flow. Its tempo is accelerated during the process of a revolution when changes are more rapid and radical. At such a time social necessity compels advance trends in culture and a loosening of the old roots, which creates a conflict between the old pattern and the new struggling to be born. The protagonists of the old culture who fear changes, in a desperate attempt to maintain the status quo, declare themselves as the guardians of morality and civilisation to stave off the new oncoming tide, while the advocates of transformation cannot but defy the old standards and codes. For every stage of social change calls for a cultural form that expresses its own needs, as the old which a past age had created can no longer utilise the new forces or techniques or reflect the new ideals in its content. In this struggle, the defenders of the old culture resort to uncultured and even barbaric methods which they had themselves once despised and condemned. For, when a force ceases to be progressive it becomes repressive. It is the new society which alone can provide the artists scope for the fullest development in every department of culture and science. Today the synthesis of life is broken by a disorganised

society in which each branch of activity is isolated from the other, the philosopher from the scientists, the artist from the engineer and each and all from the massive web of a great pulsating indivisible life, in which each is a vital supporting factor adding to the balance, beauty and contours of the total. For instance, it is time even the mechanised machine ceased to be regarded merely in terms of rigid geometrical contours, a generator of murky air and smokes, static without passion, and came to be assimilated as easily and simply and as profoundly as the landscape below and the firmament above; mastered and made to live as heroically and movingly as the ancient tales of historical narratives. Machines have today become extensions of man's limbs. They portray the power man has come to establish over the forces of nature, his conquest of the elements. This tussle is as old as man himself. The struggle is full of beauty, rhythm, music, colour. If man in his weakness has allowed the machine to master him, it is not the fault of the machine which is but a creature of man, to be made and destroyed by him. One may as well censure appetite itself, for it often overpowers man. The radio is only an amplification of man's lungs, the telephone of his ears. To frown upon the aeroplane and sing of the creaking country-cart, is not even poetic justice. It is sheer conservative sectarianism. The plough was as outlandish an innovation once as the tractor is today. To ignore man's inexhaustible genius for forging new implements is to ignore the very laws of social change, and no true artist can afford to do that. "An artist produces more as a biological function", says Rivera Diego, the great Mexican artist, "just as a tree produces flowers and fruit nor mourns their loss each year, knowing that the next season it shall blossom and bear fruit again". Art should express not merely what is but also what might be, not the diluted average but the concentrated aspiration, not the sheer discouraging defeats but much more the transforming possibilities. All aspects of art expression must embrace and portray vitally the ambitions, hopes and struggles of

humanity, must universalise figures to make them symbols of vast vision and action; give them that broad human significance which must fully rouse and rally the community's interest. Art has to be like a free, large building, where men and women can congregate and feel their communal oneness, their large physical and social unity. It must be public in its function, and though integrated to a social structure, yet prepared for the most sweeping social changes.

INDIAN SCULPTURE

BY

D. P. ROY CHOUDHURY

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THE fundamental theme of Indian sculpture was religion which often sought relief in elementary sensualism. The tendency was instinctive on account of excitable forms in which were embodied contemporary constructions of the deities. The lines which embraced curves and rhythmic flow were not free from this susceptibility. Apparently, they were designed to be so but the achieved result aimed at a sublimation that would lend service to an ideal. It was dovotion distinct from satisfaction of elementary emotions. Naturally, a compromise between this objective and the instinctive urge that contributed to the total effect had to be adjusted. The attempt stood the test and lent service to the cause. God conceived within was visualised in a concrete form. He was approachable through sensationality. The idealised human form was made an object of worship.

The intensity of the urge pressed for an immediate expression in realising itself in outward action. It had enough strength to pull down massive rocks as if without any effort. The forms of the dream hidden within took shape to fit in with the objective. The hewn out objects indentified themselves with forms of flesh and blood. They were made to live an immortal life and live today to inspire awe in the minds of modern sculptors who have yet to learn as to how the impenetrable rocks were chipped off bit by bit to produce an effect of throbbing life in lifeless stones.

There was no automatic device of a pointing machine that gave certainty to enlarge a small sketch to a colossal structure, no electric

chisel to minimise labour, nor a studio where light could be adjusted to study relative values of planes. But they were done, and how, baffles all imagination. The only solution we can guess at was the indefatigable zeal to work and determination to achieve what grew in the creative mind. Sincerity reinforced by keen observation was the keynote of the expression and the expression relied on vast experience built up, on knowledge gained out of failures. This is the clue that reveals the secret of the masters.

The finished surface of the completed figures bears no trace of the tremendous labour that was involved in producing the effect. The strain was concealed and the art of concealment developed into a science which made simplicity a possible aspiration.

In short, what appeared to be simple was an illusive record of great complications. The quality was acquired through SADHANA, a hard struggle and not a gift of coincidence nor the result of the pursuit of a leisurely hobby.

The Sadhana was directed to fulfil the expectations of a preconceived design entirely free from the pollution introduced by perverted intellectual activities in the realm of art. What the Sadhana conceived and its pursuit realised was a thing to be worshipped. The gain was assured because there was no unwarranted intrusion of don'ts preferred by elements of morals hanging dubiously in the balance of relative values. The protectors of good conduct had no other business than remain mere spectators and lodge solemn protests in the court of their consciousness where conviction is kept ever ready to deliver judgment in favour of self-decided finality. The aim leads to nowhere except to reserve a vicious speculation unsuited to purity of expression.

Plate 2. The Elephant (Konarak)

Plate 3

" The Konarak Horse "

The vital momentum of creative energy as has been explained was not confined to India alone but the psychological influence was felt wherever efforts have been directed to the sphere of our concern, that is expression through forms of art. Instances would not be wanting if we contact sculptures left behind by Greeks, Romans, Assyrians, Egyptians and many other countries that rose to great heights of civilisation. The evolution of the motifs of religion or social aspects of life as illustrated in flat or round would go to substantiate the fact that elementary emotions were the vital force that prompted the artists to create. The trend is pre-historic and the same motivating elements have lived thousands of years to dominate the mind of the supreme animal, the man, who thinks and is endowed with imagination, the range of whose activity is limitless.

As such, we can rely on the fact that art stood for an expression, pure and simple, which was committed to meet the demands of certain patterns that satisfied the objective of the subject matter and the mental focus of the executive agent. The expressions released through patterns therefore had nothing to do with the motives of morals which are liable to suit convenience of individual, time, conventions, etc.

Let us now proceed to see the great forces at work, in their own elements. Let us go back six or seven hundred years behind our times between the years 1200 and 1280 A. D. and plunge deep into the depths of the buried past to rediscover the land of dreams where great creative minds grew to immeasurable heights to bestow blessings on a raptured world and restore appreciation of beauty in place of thoughts contaminated by ugliness.

We are now at Konarak, a place in Orissa. We are facing the temple dedicated to the Lord Surya, the source of life and knowledge. In this everlasting storehouse of beauty, the dreams of the remote past,

present themselves as if they happened yesterday. The memory of bygone days is refreshed by the contact of great creations. The environment vibrates to be in tune with the responding cords of the heart. We see the mighty sculptors pressing their skill to fulfil the mission of their dreams, the dream of creation and posterity. The veil of vagueness has been removed and vivid forms are perceptible now. The dream has come to reality with all the grandeur that was concealed in the mind.

A complete boulder with extensive area has been hewn out. The surface which was once barren and plain is now the abode of God. The glamour of Heaven as our myth could extend has been displayed in exuberance of wealth through forms of beauty.

There is the chariot (Plate 1.) of the Lord. The wheels on which the body of the chariot rests seem to be ready to move. What is required is only release from inertia to make it mobile.

There again is the majestic elephant (Plate 2.), standing in repose, it breathes. The massive muscles and bones in stone show distinct signs of movements, one feels scared at the presence of the gigantic frame, but as curiosity grows to appreciate better, the fear created at first sight dwindles away to restore calm and joy. You feel that the power which could crush you to atoms stands as a symbol of beauty. The fear has been elevated to love, love for the beautiful. As you move on, assertive and self - directed introduction comes from the horse with the warrior marching along with him. At once your attention is rivetted on the colossal achievement; you gaze in astonishment at the unimaginable feat of craftsmanship. The accomplishment is a revelation which put all other attempts of animal studies of the world into insignificance.

Even Greek sculptures of this magnificent creature have failed to

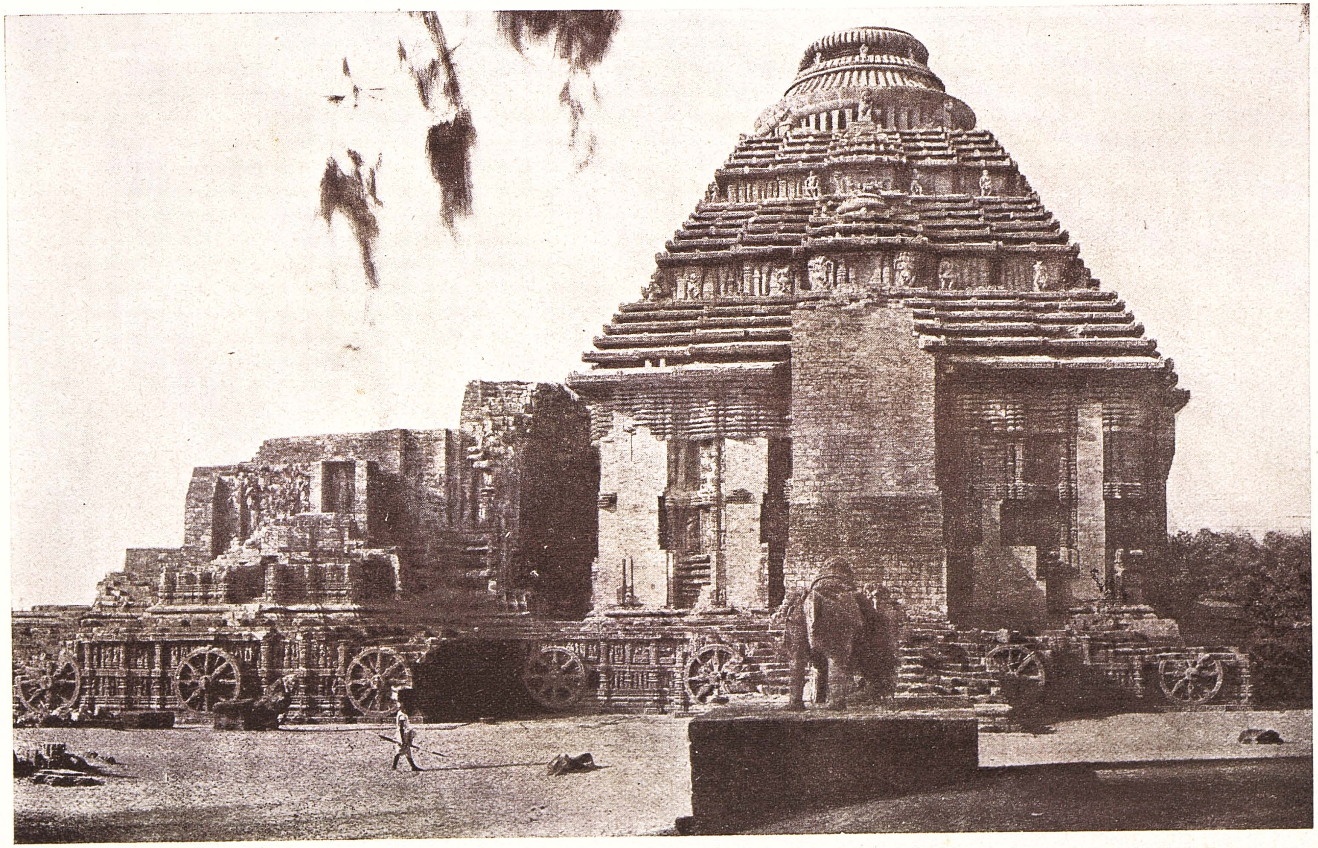

Plate 1. The Chariot (Konarak)

Plate 4 "Nataraja"

come anywhere near the standard of the Konarak horse (Plate 3.). The rock-cut form in this particular specimen is a personification of vigour, most befitting characteristics of an animal, that must face death and defy its power. The balance of the composition is undisturbed by efficiency of imitation. Knowledge of form and proportion required for artistic end stand on a base far above the successful achievement of the dead accuracy of anatomy. It is a monument erected to challenge the onslaughts of time, it is an achievement that baffles all calculations to conclude as to how every thing got adjusted in perfect harmony. We instinctively ourselves question : Could it have been the work of a man ?

We leave alone these concrete forms of dreams to rest in peace, and begin our search afresh towards further south, the land of unique architecture of the Dravidas, the home of superb bronze shrines and magnificent Gopurams.

Let us contact Nataraja (Plate 4.) first. This is the image that immortalised the fleeting movements of dancing and rhythm of lines in violent action. This is the image on which Rodin, the world's greatest sculptor of modern age, was lost in ecstacy to record his adoration. It is made of bronze, solid, yet supple by the magic touch of the *sthapati* of the south. It is understood Chola Kings claim its birth in the land they ruled. Let it be whatever it may. Our concern is not the date or the king.

We pause for a while to meditate on the theme that made a still object encroach successfully in to the sphere of constant movement. The theme is that of dance of destruction. Obviously it is, since no other idea can safely associate in a place where destruction is raging beyond human control.

A long gage bewilders the sight, mind is concentrated on the steady ascent ot the rāga, may be Mālkosh or Hindol, which is being played

behind the veil of time buried under the past. Rāga, tāla and padakshepa have joined together for the reception of extreme Murchhanā. The whirl of the dance has almost reached the point of ecstacy. The vibration of Mridanga has assumed the magnitude of roaring thunder, the Damaru on the uplifted hand is indicating time, the time for the somma to come. At last the lightning struck, the dancing came to a sudden standstill. The mental vision came back to reality again. But we are confounded to observe that the stillness of the bronze is still in continuous motion. It must be so as it had been dancing since its birth.

EDITORIAL NOTE :—The four plates illustrating the article are from the photographs kindly lent by the Central Asian Antiquities Museum, New Delhi.

GARHWAL SCHOOL OF PAINTING

(1658-1858)

BY

MUKANDI LAL, B. A. (Oxon), Bar-at-Law

II

OTHER ARTISTS OF GARHWAL SCHOOL

As already mentioned Sham Das (father) and Hardas (son) came to Srinagar-Garhwal, in 1658, with the refugee Prince Suleman Shikoh, son of Dara Shikoh. Sham Das was the son of Banwari Das, one of the foremost Hindu painters of Shah Jahan's court. Har Das's son Hira Lal, who was born in Garhwal, was the father of Mangat Ram, the father of Mola Ram. I have not come across any painting with autographs of the ancestors of Mola Ram. I have seen several drawings (and some I possess) which are ascribed by Balak Ram to Mangat Ram, even though they are not autographed by Mangat Ram. According to Mola Ram he learnt the art of painting from his own father (Mangat Ram) whom he calls his Ustad (master).

According to Indian traditional practice art and craft, like other vocations and sciences, have been taught by father to son. The Schools grew like family trees branching out. But in fact all schools have really a common ancestor, a single individual. Mangat Ram was nearest ancestor of Mola Ram about whom Balak Ram (b. 1867 alive in 1949) had heard from his father, Tej Ram, (1833-1904) that he was a painter, and had painted pictures and drawn designs for moulds for goldsmiths' craft. The drawings and paintings, that have been found with the descendants of Mola Ram or which have gone out of Garhwal, are definitely and decidedly the works of the artists of Garhwal School. Neither Mola Ram nor his descendants were collectors of others' paintings. They were creators and preservers of their own paintings. It is easier to identify

pictures found in artists' families than those found in the possessions of art lovers and connoisseurs. Balak Ram will have to be believed when he tells us that a particular work is that of Mangat Ram even though his name is not on it. Balak Ram has told me that certain drawings of sword handles, sword covers, drawings of moulds for making images, are by Mangat Ram. Plate 2* is an illustration of a sword handle drawing by Mangat Ram. It is a marvellous drawing. I have also secured from Balak Ram, drawings of camel fights (Plate 7) and elephant fights and tiger hunting from elephant's back. They might be either by Mangat Ram or Mola Ram. They are not autographed. Before Mola Ram, Artists of Garhwal School, like other Hindu artists, remained anonymous or due to caste stigma they did not identify themselves with their paintings, whose creators were invariably goldsmiths (sunars). Mola Ram being a poet incorporated his name in the descriptive verses he wrote on his pictures.

Mola Ram's father had seven sons. But Mola Ram does not speak of his brothers. Though he does make mention of his pupils and contemporary artists, who came to learn painting from him. He has made particular mention of Baqar Ali and Mani Ram. It is written by Mola Ram that when Baqar Ali visited his studio he said to him (Mola Ram):—

"I Baqar Alim Fardak, now see (with my own eyes) of which I had heard in the world (in the plains) that you (Mola Ram) have drawn beautiful pictures according to cannons of art. You have created pictures of pretty women, with moonlike (beautiful) faces as if moon (itself) was sitting. You are also known in the world as a philosopher. You are renowned as a sage and brave man, who does good to all[1]". Similarly, Mani Ram Bairagi, who visited Mola Ram in 1818 told him, "Oh poet (Mola Ram) I have heard of your reputation

* Reproduced in "Roopa-Lekha", Vol. XX, No. 2, facing page 117.

Plate 9. "Rape of the Yadav women" (Mukandi Lal Collection) By—Chaitu of Garhwal

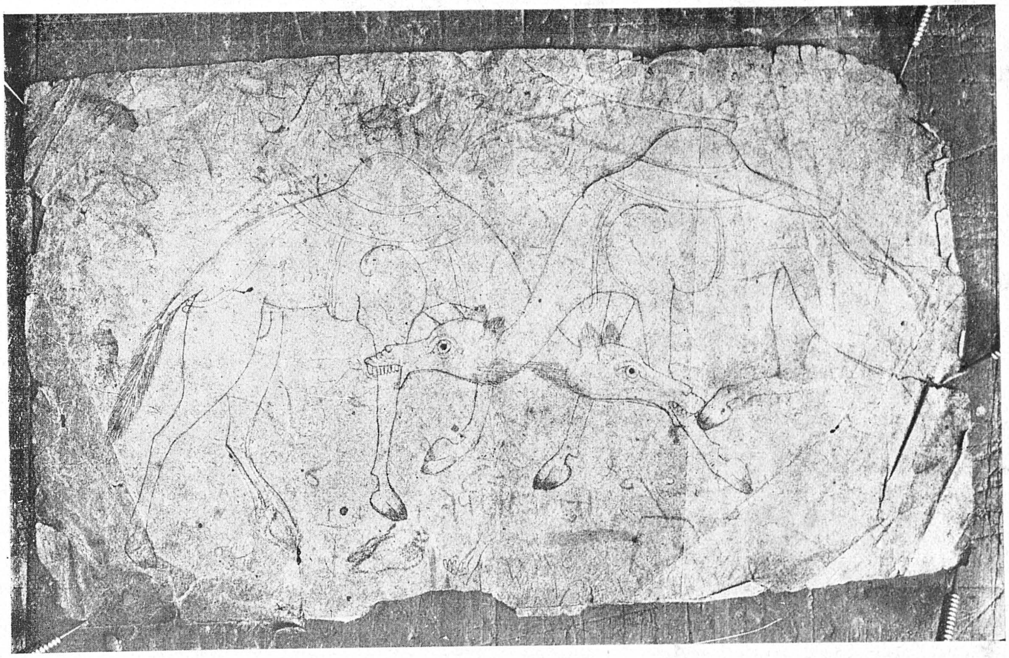

Plate 7. "Camel fight" (Mukandi Lal Collection)

Plate 16. "Prince Suleman Shikoh" By—Shiv Ram
(Mukandi Lal Collection)

(as an artist) so I have come to you, an artist. Now, show me (your paintings) of which I have heard so much, to verify your reputation (as an artist). Oh! Mola Ram you are so famous all over the world. Show me all your great works so that I can see with my own eyes (what I have heard of)[2]". Exactly similar words were uttered by the first Gurkha Governor of Garhwal, Hastidal Chautariya in 1803, who said to Mola Ram when he met him, "I have been hearing of your glory and fame (as an artist) in Kantipur. Now I have seen with my own eyes your wonderful pictures [3]".

Mola Ram had, among others, two contemporary Garhwali pupils — Manku and Chaitu. Their names have been found on two paintings in the collection of the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal. Manku's name is on the back of Krishna and Gopes' hide-and-seek game (Blindman's Bluff, Plate 8) and that of Chaitu on the back of a picture of the "Rape of the Yadav women" (Yadava Mahila Haran, Plate 9).

When I saw the reproductions of these two pictures in the "Studies in Indian Painting" of Mr. N. C. Mehta, I wrote in the "Hindustani" of 1932, page 437:—

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1. "Fardāk, Bāqir Ali dar jahāne ism,
Musawar ne tasvír khainchí rasm,
Wazan sabni yin chuni rang āb,
Khiradamand visiyar tum dar jahān
Karte ho khubi sab hin saun miyān.
Sakhi mard ālam mai kahate tumain." (Fardak Baqir Ali).

2. "Kirati suni tumāri Kavi āye hain musawaron pās,
Kanan ki suni bāt sānchai thairāiye.
Kaho Maula Ram Khalak Sāri sarnām ho,
Tum pai gun jeto *maunko* ānkh dikhaiyo." (Mani Ram Bairagi).

3. "Kantipur men Kirati tihāri sunat rahe.
Ab ānkh nihāri chitra tuhāre dekhe." (Hastidal Chautariya).

"Chaitu's name appears on the 'Rape of Yadav Women'. The painting is in Tehri Maharaja's collection. This (Chaitu) appears to be the name of its author, artist. Like Manku, Chaitu also is hill (Garhwali) name. Both these names are common in Garhwal even today. Manku (on the back of Hide and Seek—Blindman's Bluff, Plate 8) and Chaitu (on 'Rape of the Yadava women', Plate 9). Both Paintings are in the style of Mola Ram. Their style is so like Mola Ram's. Therefore, it is possible that both Manku and Chaitu were Mola Ram's pupils [4]".

This bold generalisation I made in 1932. In August, 1936, when I paid a visit to my ancestral home, Srinagar (Garhwal), and examined the drawings, and paintings of Mola Ram, still in the possession of Balak Ram, a great-grand-son of Mola Ram, amidst other important documentary evidence, I found the sketch (Plate 10) of "Blindman's Bluff" (Hide and Seek) which Mola Ram must have prepared for the guidance of his pupil, Manku. He has written on the sketch even names of colours for various parts of the picture. This is conclusive proof that Manku was a pupil or contemporary artist of Mola Ram. What is more extraordinary is that on May 8, 1949, when I inspected the collection of Shri Kasturbhai Lalbhai at Ahmedabad, I was extremely delighted to find a complete drawing on the same subject—Hide and Seek (Plate 11). It is a complete picture, unlike Plate 10, except that it is not in colours. In every detail it is the same as Plates 8 and 10. This drawing (Plate 11) is in my opinion by Mola Ram, even though it is not autographed. The source it came from proves that it must be by Mola Ram or by some other artist of Garhwal School. At the request of Shri Gaganendra Nath Tagore, the elder brother of Dr. Abanindra Nath Tagore, in 1910, I sent Balak Ram to Calcutta, with some paintings of Garhwal School. Shri Gaganendra Nath Tagore purchased a few

4. Vide Author's "Chitrakār, Kavi, Mola Rām Ki Chitrakalā aur Kavitā", "Hindustani", 1932-1942.

paintings from Balak Ram. This single colour picture of Hide and Seek (Plate 11) is one of them.

Originally in 1926, Shri N. C. Mehta rightly held that Manku was a Court Painter of Garhwal.* But since 1938, he changed his opinion due to the misinterpretation of a verse and said that "Mankoo"† was woman painter of Basohli School. I do not wish to enter into the controversy whether there was any woman painter in Basohli by name Mankoo or not. But so far as Manku the painter of "Blindman's Bluff" (Plate 8) is concerned he was a man artist, Manku, who has written on the back of the picture *Manak-ki-likhi.* I have never agreed with Shri N. C. Mehta that "Manku" or "Mankoo" was a woman painter of Basohli. I am glad that I am now supported in this view by the "Mārg" Reviewer (Mr. Karl Khandalavala). "The Basohli Series dated 1730 A.D. is not painted by Manku. Mr. N. C. Mehta who wrote about this series had misinterpreted the inscription. So eminent a Sanskritist as Mahama-Upadhayay Kave who once read the inscription at the request of the reviewer is clear that the inscription indicated that the series (Gitgovind pictures of Basohli) was painted by a male painter (and not a female painter as N. C. Mehta thought)"‡. Decidedly Manku, the author of Blindman's Bluff, was a Garhwali Artist — a contemporary or pupil of Mola Ram.

In Kasturbhai Lalbhai collection, I found another picture — "Welcoming the Rains" (Plate 12), which even though not autographed by Mola Ram is definitely by him for the following reasons:—

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* Vide N. C. Mehta's Studies in Indian Painting, pp. 53 to 55.

† ED. NOTE—Vide my note on Manaku. It may quite be that there was more than one Manaku. The Basholi Manaku painted his Geeta Govinda in 1730 A. D., while the Garhwali Manak or Manaku illustrated the same poem by Jayadeva later. There is no doubt that both the artists were men. — N. C. MEHTA.

‡ Marg (1949) p. 5 Vol. 3 No. 2.

(a) The colours are the same as Mola Ram used at one stage.

(b) The technique is the same as in his autographed paintings.

(c) Faces of women and their dress and ornaments are the same.

(d) On the foreheads of the two heroines (the high class ladies) there is Mola Ram's peculiar and special, never failing "hall mark", *Chandan tika* in horizontal curved lines (like the 3rd moon) which is a religious Saibite sacred mark common in Garhwal. No other artist except Mola Ram and his pupils have drawn this sacred aristocratic mark of Chandan on forehead of women.

(e) Wooden panelling on walls and domestic architecture is typical of Mola Ram.

(f) Mola Ram's clouds, cranes or swans, his favourite, *Manora* flowering tree, common in Garhwal, peacock and the *hooka* are there. As in the "Consoling the Queens" (Plate 5)* so in this (Welcoming the Rains) Mola Ram has painted evidently the two Ranis (Queens). One of them seems to be fond of her *hooka*. And the other, suffering from inferiority complex (being junior queen) though she is younger and prettier. She kept herself aloof from the Senior Rani. The Senior Rani is welcoming the clouds which appear to be hesitant and unwilling to proceed further, so she has sent cranes and swans to persuade them to come on. The other, the Junior Rani is holding an umbrella over head to protect her head from the rain her cowife has invited. In the original you can see that the umbrella is made of leaves or *bhojpatra* (birch bark). Such leafy umbrellas are made and used in Garhwal even now. The picture gives an impression that the artist (Mola Ram) had not quite finished the painting. It gives the impression of incompleteness. The expressions and their ages in the faces of

* Reproduced in "Roopa-Lekha", Vol. XX, No. 2, facing page 116.

the two Ranis and their maids are so different and characteristic and appropriate. For all these reasons, and more, which a critic and keen observer may find in the picture, one has to come to the conclusion that Plate 13 is by Mola Ram and is a typical specimen of Garhwal School.

Similarly, the "Rape of the Yadav Women "(Plate 9.), is in typical Garhwal style by Mola Ram's pupil, Chaitu. Chaitu's pictures are in Tehri collection; and some are in the collection of R. B. Chakrdhar, ex-Dewan of Tehri. A few are in the collection of Mr. Manuk of Patna, and the Kalabhawan, Banaras. A remarkable series of thirteen pictures of Rukmani-Mangal, also called Rukmani-Haran — "Elopement of Rukmani with Krishna" is in my collection. Judging from the style and technique this series appears to be the handiwork of Mola Ram, Manku and Chaitu. The entire series is not by one artist. I am not going into detailed discussion over this question here. It is being done in my larger works. I am reproducing the fifth picture of the series in Plate 10 — "Response to Rukmani's message" being conveyed by the messenger sent by Rukmani to Krishna — that unless he hurries to take her away her marriage has been arranged with Shishupal by her brother Rukma. This picture is in my opinion by Mola Ram. None of the pictures in the series are signed or dated. I discovered a manuscript on 5th September, 1949 with Balak Ram in which the elopement of Rukmani with Krishna is described in verse. I am convinced that Manku and Chaitu were both Garhwali contemporary artists, most likely, pupils of Mola Ram. The paintings of Garhwal School bear an unmistakable and unique hall mark, which we do not find in any other Pahari School. It is Mola Ram's horizontal, curved chandan (Sandal paste) mark on the forehead of high class ladies and gentlemen. Wherever you find this chandan (not round small tika or perpendicular tilak but horizontal half curved) religious mark on the forehead, be sure that the picture is either by Mola Ram

or by his pupils, Manku, Chaitu, and others of Garhwal School. This mark is best exhibited in Dampati (husband and wife) by Mola Ram, (Plate 14.)

That Manku and Chaitu were Mola Ram's contemporaries is proved historically also. In the Garhwal-Raj-Vansawali manuscript there is a long list of those notable subjects of Raja Pradyuman Shah (1785-1804) who gave ceremonial presents (Nazrana), at his Darbar. In this list Manku and Chaitu's names are given. "Manku Lekhwar of Dasoli" and Chaitu Sah[1] paid the former Rs. 51/- and the latter Rs. 41/-, as Nazrana. Lekhwar is the designation of the Private Secretary or the Personal Assistant of the Raja. Lekhwar is from Hindi verb likhna (to write); and Lekhwar is one who writes for and on behalf of the ruler or a high dignitary. The Rawal (Mahant) of Badrinath (Garhwal) still has a Lekhwar, who corresponds to Private Secretary. Dasoli is a Pargana in Upper Garhwal. "Sah" is added in Garhwal to the names of goldsmiths. Descendants of Mola Ram are still addressed as "Sah". In Garhwal "Sah" is honorific caste designation of goldsmiths. Mola Ram's people had taken up the profession of goldsmiths. Balak Ram tells me that Mangat Ram had seven sons. He cannot trace the history of Mola Ram's brothers. He says they all migrated to various parts of Garhwal as artisans (goldsmiths). May be that Manku and Chaitu were Mola Ram's own brothers. Anyhow they are undoubtedly two Garhwali, prominent and known painters of Garhwal School.

I must admit that naturally the court being at Srinagar and the

1. "Sah" is quite different from "Shah". Sah is added to names of goldsmiths in Garhwal and to the names of Vaisyas in Kumaon. "Shah" is the family title of the Ruling house of Garhwal. It was given by Bahlol Lodi to Bhalbhadra Pal of Garhwal for the military aid he rendered to the Emperor in subduing his rebel Governors in 1506 A. D. He became Bahadur Shah since, for his personal valour and meritorious military services rendered to the Emperor Bahlol Lodi.

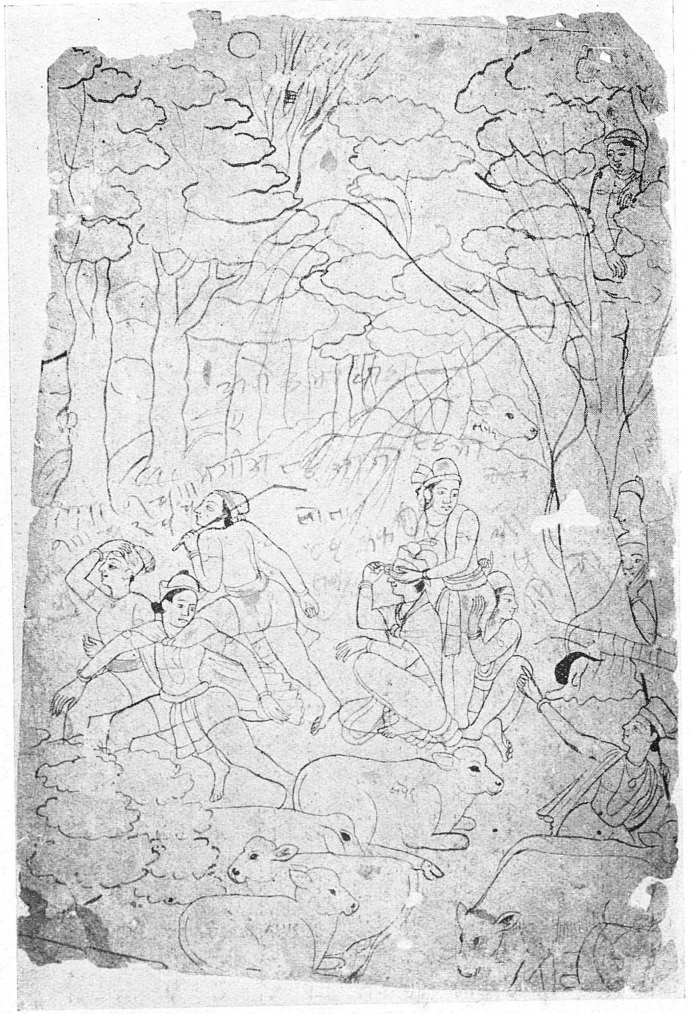

Plate 10, "Blindman's Bluff" (Sketch) By—Mola Ram
(Mukandi Lal Collection)

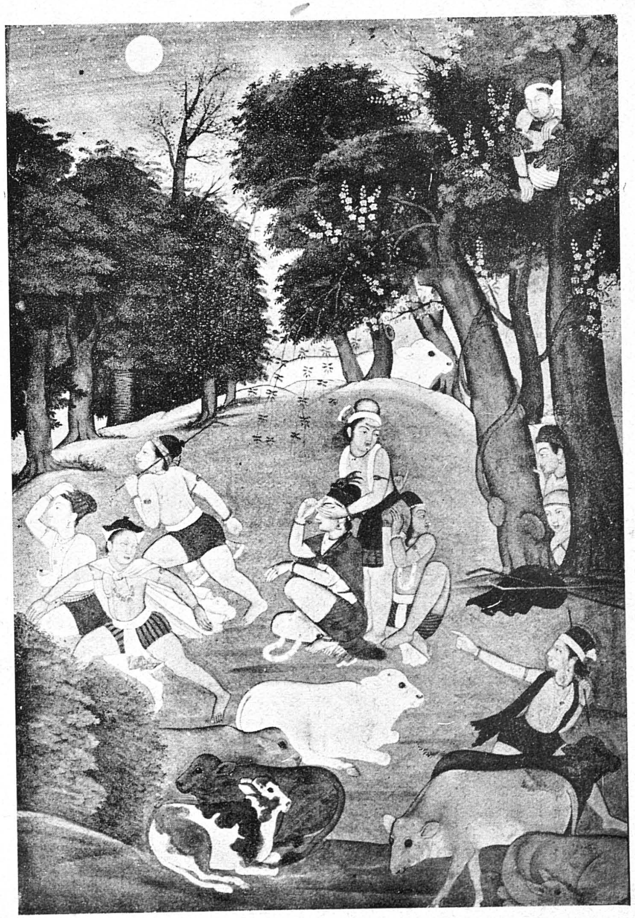

Plate 8. "Blindman's Bluff" By—Manku
(Tehri Collection)

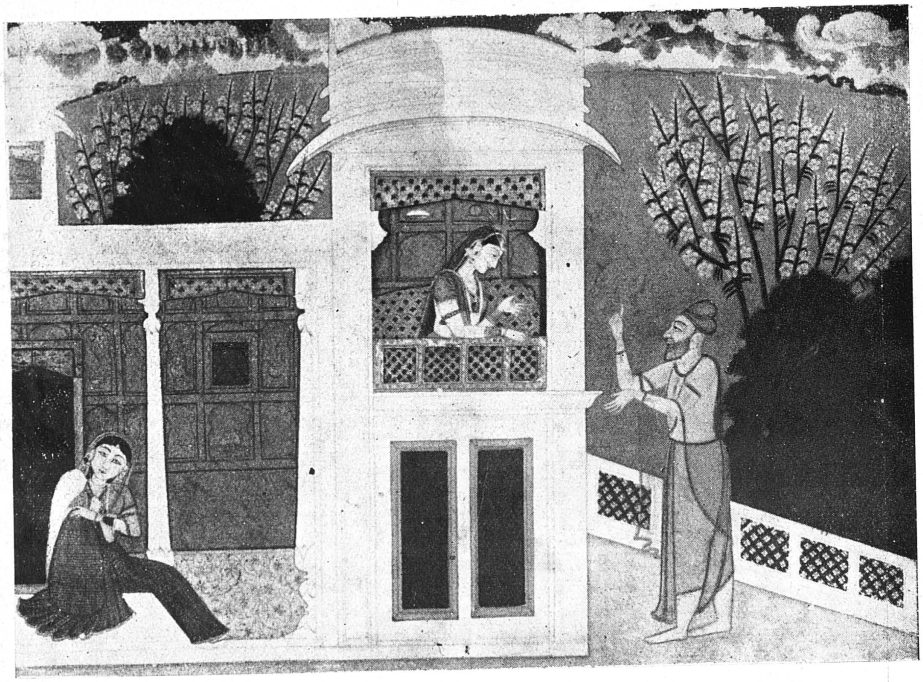

Plate 12. "Response to Rukmani's message" By—Mola Ram
(Mukandi Lal Collection)

Plate 15. Nursingh Avtar By—Mola Ram
(Balak Ram Collection)

Capital of the whole Garhwal being Srinagar, all artists lived at Srinagar. Upto so late as 1877, 44 years after the death of Mola Ram, according to a contemporary writer[2], there were no less than five families of artists (Musawars — painters) at Srinagar where there were altogether 7,285 families until 1802 A. D. Only two out of these five families were descendants of Mola Ram. These two families are still at Srinagar. The other three families of artists have disappeared, or migrated. Probably they settled down as goldsmiths in various parts of Garhwal.

Mola Ram's Studio

That there was a Garhwal School of painting and that Mola Ram had his own Studio in which he trained pupils, there can be no doubt at all. Mola Ram's fame as an artist had reached Nepal, as elsewhere. And when the Gurkha Governor Hastidal met Mola Ram, at Srinagar (Garhwal), he told Mola Ram that he had heard of his fame as an artist and he was much delighted to see his paintings:—

" Kantipur men kirati tuhari sunat rahe'
Ab ankh nihari chitra tuhare dekhe.

Amongst other visitors and admirers of Mola Ram, who visited his studio two deserve special mention. One was a muslim artist, Bāqar Ali

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2. I have a copy of this manuscript of History of Srinagar with me. It is a most remarkable historical document which I have verified with authentic contemporary history. It mentions the frescoes on the walls of the palaces of the Royal family, the Courtiers and notable citizens of Srinagar. I remember distinctly that on a smooth wall of our front room (baithak Khana) at Srinagar, there were pictures painted. I remember particularly green parrots with red heads and some human figures. That was in 1893. That year the whole of old Srinagar (Garhwal) palaces and houses was demolished and swept away by the Gauna flood of the Alakananda (the source of Ganga). It is a curious phenonmena that some things or events stick to human memory even from infancy. I remember the frescoes on one wall of our house just as I remember playing with my childhood's friend Tulsi Ram, a grandson of Mola Ram. Balak Ram was much senior, so I do not remember talking to him until 1909 when he showed me Mola Ram's paintings at my request.

Fardak, who insisted on staying with him to learn the art of painting pictures of multifarious colours, said he:—

"Rahain ham hamaishai tuhāre sang,
Karain mask tasvir rangin rang".

Another distinguished visitor was one Savant, Mani Ram Bairagi, who had first visited Srinagar in 1775 A. D., and came to Srinagar second time in 1818. He saw Mola Ram in his studio and asked him the cause of Srinagar's ruin and desertion by learned men, the Ruling family and the Courtiers.

Another mention of Mola Ram's Studio is given in Mola Ram's own words, in his History of the House of Garhwal Rajas. The occasion for the reference to his Studio occured when the Garhwali Governor of Dehra Dun (which then was part of Garhwal Kingdom) rose in rebellion and came upon Srinagar, the Capital. Thereupon the Raja Jaikrit Shah (1780-85) went to Mola Ram's Studio and asked him to go to Jagat Prakash, Raja of Nahan (Sirmor) to seek his help. Mola Ram, instead of going himself to Nahan drew a picture and composed an appropriate poem; and sent them with a messenger, to Raja Jagat Prakash of Nahan.* The picture and the poem had the desired effect, and the assistance did come and the rebellion was quelled.

* Maharaj ati dukhit bhayo, Chitrasāl mahi hamko kahyo.
Molārām kām taji jāo, Chitrasāl nāhak hi banāo.
Chitrasāl likhi tum kyā pāyo, Hamko dustan dabāyo,
Tab ham kinyo yihai sawaiya, Lāge tir nahin lāge rupaiyā.
Jagat Prakash tum bhānu sam, Tam kiyo hamhun grās,
Grah grahyo jyon gāj hi kāun, Ghamand sinh diyo trās.
Kich ke bich men hāthi phanse, Tab hāthi ko hāth de hāthi nikāse.
Yihai chhand ham diyo banāi, Chitra sahit likhi diyo pathai.

Mola Ram writes, "thus oppressed by the rebel Commander, Ghananand Singh, the Maharajā Jaikrit Shah came to him in his Studio and told him to give up the work (of painting) he had in hand; and asked him to secure the assistance of Jagat Prakash. Mola Ram composed the poem (noted above) in which he said, 'when an elephant gets caught by a crocodile (in the water) it is another elephant alone who can rescue him'. Jagat Prakash should

The Home of the Garhwal School was Srinagar and not Tehri

The centre and home of Garhwal School was at Srinagar (Garhwal) which is on the left bank of the Alakananda (the main tributary or the source of the Ganga), and not at Tehri. Mr. N. C. Mehta has written a Chapter in his " Studies in Indian Paintings " on " Court Art of Tehri Garhwal." His opinion is based on the fact that he saw several paintings of Garhwal School in the collections of Raja of Tehri. Unfortunately, this surmise of Mr. N. C. Mehta is being repeated since by other writers, on his authority. In fact, there were no artists at Tehri. Tehri was not even in existence before 1815. When the last Raja of Garhwal, Pradyuman Shah (1785-1804), was driven out of Srinagar (Garhwal) by the Gurkha invaders, in 1803; and when in their turn Gurkhas were expelled out of Garhwal, by the aid of British forces, in 1815, Garhwal was divided into two. Srinagar, the home of Mola Ram and my own home town came to the share of British Government; and the son of Pradyuman Shah, Sudarshan Shah, who was given the other half of Garhwal, selected Tehri for his Capital for stratigical reasons. As it is a small delta between two rivers (Bhilangana and Bhagirathi). There was no town at Tehri then. There were only a few huts of fishermen (dhunars) at Tehri until 1815. Even the Raja Sudershan Shah's uncle, Kunwar Pritam Shah, who was a pupil of Mola Ram, had to go all the way, a distance of 30 miles, to Srinagar, to continue his lessons in painting. Prince Pritam Shah complained to Mola Ram, " I have been coming to my master's door at Srinagar so often (from my

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Footnote from Page 26 continued —
come to help to extricate him (Jaikrit Sah) from the crocodile, (Ghananand Singh) as he (Jagat Prakash) was the sun on his arrival (the rise), the darkness (Ghanand Singh) would disappear". The poem and the picture illustrating the poem were sent to Nahan through Dhani Ram. The picture of "an elephant in the grip of a crocodile and being helped out by another elephant" is said to be in existence in Nahan Darbar. I am trying to secure a copy of it which I hope to give in my "Study of Mola Ram and His Art."

home, Tehri), my feet have got tired by coming and going, and still my master (Mola Ram) has not taught me all (I want to learn):—

Tehri sain tirat rahain Gurudware Srinagar,
Avat jāt hi pag thake diyo kavi nahin sagar.

At Tehri there were no court artists. Mola Ram (for some personal reasons) refused to come to Tehri. The Royal family itself was a refugee family at Tehri. There were no artists or families of artists at Tehri. No notable paintings were painted at Tehri Court. There were no artists or artisans at Tehri. I have seen a letter of Raja Sudarshan Shah to a trades man at Srinagar (Garhwal) asking him to get made spearheads at Srinagar. But what is a fact worth noting is that Raja Sudarshan Shah (1814-1859)* and his son Bhawani Shah (1859-1872) and his son Pratap Shah (1872-   ) all married princesses of Kangra, Guler Sukhet, Mandi and Nahan States. So did the Scions of the Royal family of Garhwal marry girls of the Panjab Hill royal families. With the Ranis and wives of other members of the royal family pictures of Kangra, Guler, Mandi and Sukhet Schools of Painting did come to Tehri Garhwal. But that does not entitle us to talk of art of Tehri-Garhwal or Court-Painters of Tehri. Tehri was founded in 1815, after which date no great Pahari Artist was born.

Garhwal School is the most prolific of all the Pahari Schools

My research and latest discoveries have shown that of all the Pahari (Himalayan) Schools, Garhwal School is the most prolific. The paintings of the Garhwal School have been scattered all over the country. They can be seen in Allahabad, Banaras, Boston and Calcutta Public museums. There are considerable number of Garhwal paintings with

* Sudarshan Shah married two daughters of Sansarchand of Kangra (1763-1823).

private collectors such as the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal and those related to and connected with the Royal family of Garhwal Rajas. Paintings of Garhwali artists reached the courts of the Rajas of Kangra, Guler, Mandi and Nahan, as these princely families were inter-married with the Royal family of Garhwal. Paintings of Garhwal School reached the Courts of these Rajas of the Western Himalayas (Panchal Pradesh) just as the paintings from their Courts came to Garhwal Court. Some of the paintings in the collection of the Maharaja of Tehri-Garhwal are really from the above mentioned centres of Himalayan (Pahari) Art. Similarly, some paintings which have been found in the Western Himalayan Courts or centres of art are of Garhwal School.

Mola Ram, at a certain stage of his life, specialised in painting pictures of all incarnations of Gods (Avatars) and Godesses (Asthdurgas), Stars of fortune (Grahas) etc. His pictures on above subjects were either taken to or copied at the above mentioned Hill States. I will cite here one illustration. In the "Ten Incarnations" (Dashavtar) series of Mola Ram there is one painting of Nursingh Avtar (Lion-man-incarnation) Plate 14 on which he has written a verse and in his own name.*

* Mola Ram has written a Hindi verse on the top of the picture (Plate 14) in which he has given his name also :—

Dohā — Chauthe Vir Nursinh, Hari Har bhaye ugra Avtar,
Dharain dhyan ih bhajain jo, Lakhain na jamko dvar.

Chhapaya — Khambh far balhin dharn kop ari dust pachharyo,
Pakar delhi mahn nakhan saun udar vidyaro.
Kausla aru Pahilad hu kar jori niharat,
Namo namo bhay tras mahan bhay bhit pukarat.
Chauthe vir Hari Harnakus ki Mukti kaun.
Maula Ram vichar kahi hwai hain sahay nijbhakt kaun.

Translation :— God assumed terrible form of Lion - man, as fourth incarnation — Nursinh Avtar. One who contemplates on Him will not see the door of death. The new incarnation (Nursinh Lion - man) came out of a pillar and caught the wicked on the door step threw him down with force and ripped open Harnakus's stomach. Kausala (his wife) and Prahalad (his son) were looking with folded hands. They were repeating sacred mantra Namo Namo terrified that the fourth incarnation of God had come to earth to give salvation to Harnakus. Mola Ram says that God alwaya comes to the rescue of his devotees.

Another copy or version of this picture was seen by Mr. J. C. French in Kangra, with Mahant of Damthal and has been reproduced by him in his "Himalayan Art" as plate XV. He has written about this picture, "Plate XV shows Vishnu in his Lion incarnation doing justice on the wicked King—Haranya Kasipu. The wicked King's virtuous son, Prahlada, on the right, and the female devotee on the left, adore the manifestation of the God's power. The subject is little startling, but the design is good. The figures of Prahlad and of the woman are typical of the Kangra valley, both in art and life."* Mr. French did not know that "the female devotee" was Prahlad's mother Kaushalya, wife of (Harnakus) Hiranya-Kasyap. A comparison and scrutiny of these two identical paintings clearly shows that both are by the same artist and as Plate 14 (reproduction of the painting which is with Balak Ram), is autographed by Mola Ram and is positively by Mola Ram, therefore, Mr. French's Plate XV which he found in Kangra, with the Mahant of Damthal, is also in my opinion by Mola Ram, or some other artist of Garhwal School, a contemporary or pupil of Mola Ram. This painting of Narsinha Avtar must have gone from Garhwal to Kangra. The Paintings of Mola Ram and other artists of Garhwal School are to be seen in several collections, private and public. Six select and good specimens of Garhwal School are now in Boston Museum. Four of them have been reproduced by my Guru, Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, in his Rajput Art Vol. II — Plate LIVA (The quelling of Kaliya); LVIII Sheltering from the Rain; LXV Mahadev and Parbati; and LXXIVB The Timid Bride. Kasturbhai Lalbhai of Ahmedabad has some in his very large collection. They were originally sold to Gaganendranath Tagore, elder brother of Abanindra Nath Tagore by Balak Ram through me, in 1910. One of these, "Radha Krishna Looking in Mirror" (Plate 15) is an exquisite specimen of Garhwal School. Although it does not bear the autograph of Mola Ram yet it is possibly by Mola Ram. We see in the painting the two

* Himalayan Art, page 54.

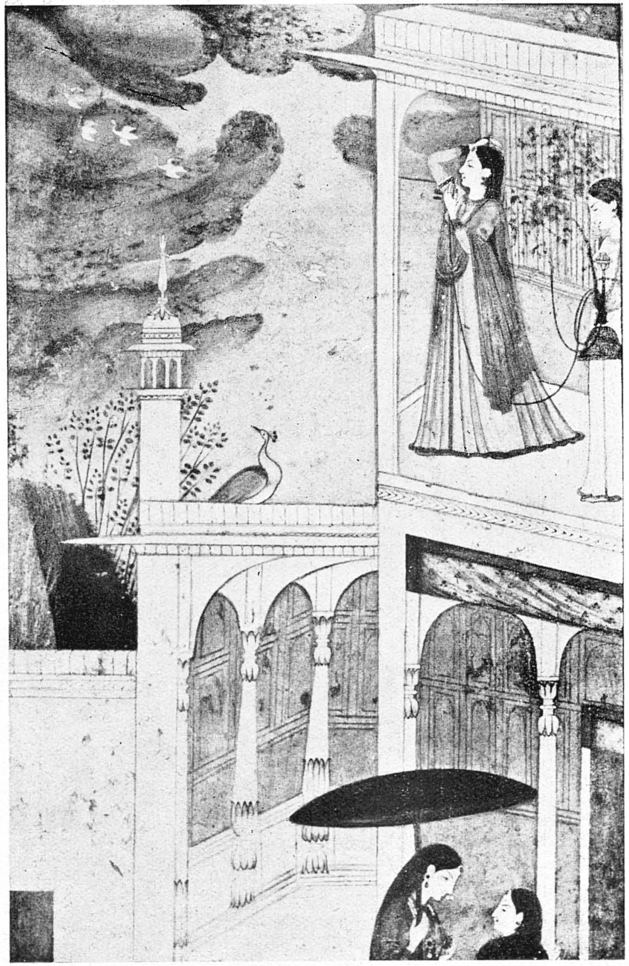


Plate 13. "Welcoming the Rains" By—Mola Ram
(Kasturbhai Lalbhai Collection)

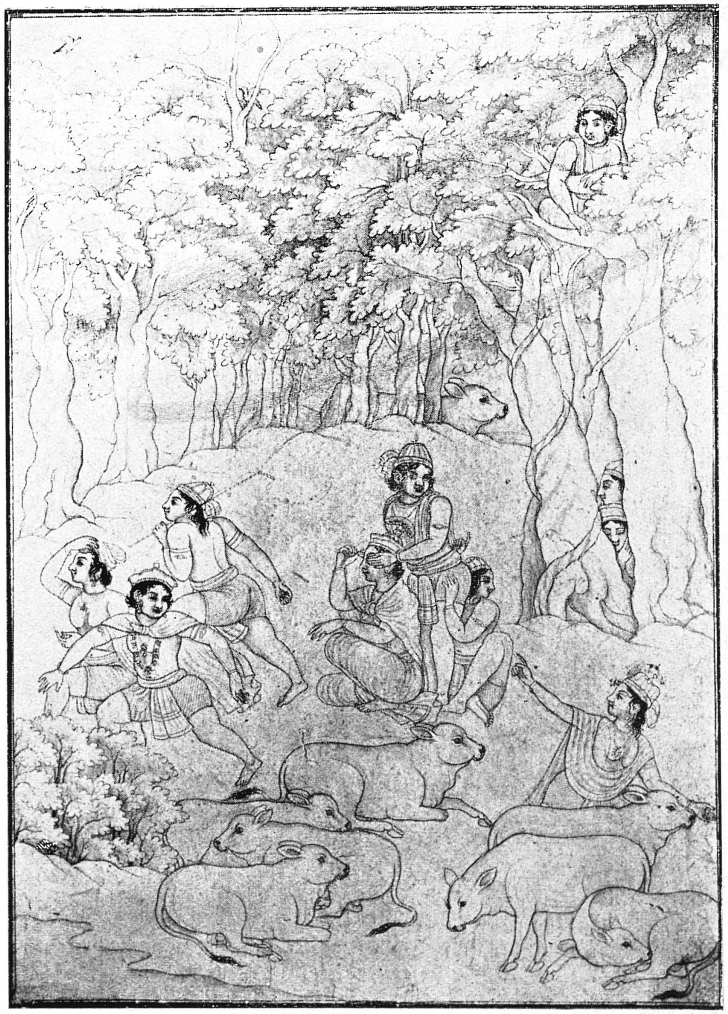


Plate 11. "Blindman's Bluff" By—Mola Ram
(Kasturbhai Lalbhai Collection)

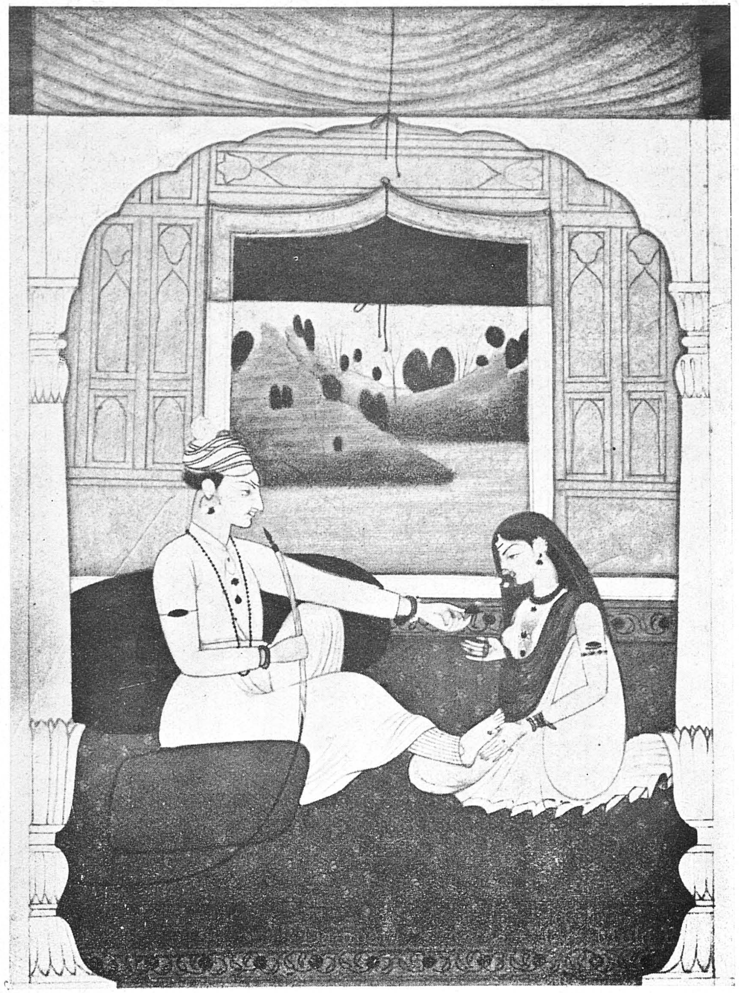


Plate 14. " Dampati " By—Mola Ram
(Mukandi Lal Collection)

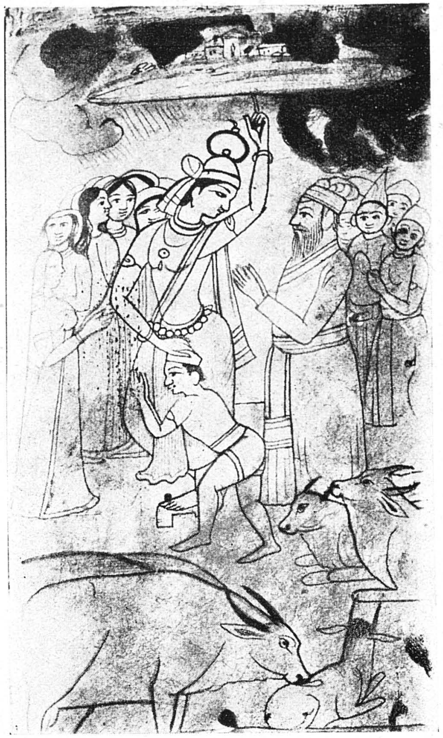


Plate 17.
" Govardhan Dharan "
By
Jawala Ram
(Mukandi Lal Collection)

familiar hills, - Nar and Narain, - on the two sides of the Ganga that flows by Srinagar. There is also on the right the perpendicular rock that rises from the river and can be seen even now at Srinagar. You see in the picture Mola Ram's typical and familiar flowering trees and birds. Above all, we find, on the forehead of Radha, Mola Ram's Chandan-tika (which no other artist except Mola Ram and his pupils used to put on high class ladies' foreheads). The wooden pillars of the balcony are typical of Garhwal domestic architecture. Framework and setting of of the picture and landscape in this remarkable picture are typical of Garhwal School and of Mola Ram. Radha and Krishna who are symbolical of a pair of lovers or dampti (husband and wife) are sitting together looking into the mirror the reflection of their own happy and loving faces.

Ajit Ghose procured six paintings of Garhwal School from Balak Ram, through me, about 12 years ago. Some pictures of Garhwal School are with Messrs. E. C. Dickinson, J. C. French and N. C. Mehta. The largest collection of Paintings of Garhwal School are with the Maharaja of Tehri. Paintings of Garhwal School are to be found in the possessions of those officials who served in Garhwal in some capacity or the other. One example of such private collection is the collection of Shri Girja Kishore Joshi, Deputy Collector, whose grandfather, Pt. Badri Datt Joshi of Almora, served in Garhwal (Srinagar) as a Deputy Collector and collected some paintings of Garhwal School. He was in Garhwal a long time and retired from there in 1890. Some pictures of Garhwal School are still left with Balak Ram. Select and most authentic, dated, autographed and representative specimens of paintings and drawings of Garhwal School, particularly of Mola Ram and his sons, are in my collection. The total output of Garhwal School paintings amounts to several thousands, and is most amazing indeed.

The School continued from 1658 as a vigorous, prolific school until 1858 A.D. for full 200 years, when it met the fate of all fine arts, generally and painting in particular. The last batch of the known artists of the Garhwal School were two sons of Mola Ram, Jwala Ram (1788-1848) and Shib Ram (1790-1855). Jwala Ram was the last notable artist of Garhwal School. I have a sketch book of 63 pages by Jwala Ram, which, according to him, he drew for the sake of his friend Bachuwa goldsmith of Hanalbagh, Almora*, where Jwala Ram was then working as a clerk to Sir Henry Ramsey, the first Commissioner of Kumaon. He had given up the art of painting for want of patronage and had become a clerk. Shib Ram became insane at the prime of his life. He had to give up painting. By this time the decline of Pahari painting was almost complete. There are some very fourth rate paintings by Shib Ram. His "Prince Suleman Shikoh" (Plate 16) demonstrates not only the decline of Rajput art but it also indicates the European influence that had set in by the middle of 19th Century. Jwala Ram's Govardhan (Plate 17) also shows the signs of decline, though there is no trace of European influence in his drawings. I am dealing with the causes of this decline and comparing works of Mola Ram and his sons in my "A Study of Mola Ram and His Art", in which more of the works of his sons and his own are given. Here I have referred to and cited only a few authentic specimens of Garhwal School paintings. I hope they will convince the admirers of Pahari School that Garhwal School's extraordinary brilliance, richness and the delineation and treatment of landscape, complicated and superb drapery and beauty of women, would have all been submerged in Kangra

* Plate 3 is the portrait of Bachuwa Zargar which is drawn in the Sketch Book. On one of the pages Jwala Ram has written in the Court language of the time (Persian manuscript Urdu): (TEXT) Wakai batarikh panch daham mah Farbari san athara sau chautis i. Mukam haul bagh barai khatir Bachua Zargar nabista badast khat Jwala Ram Mussavar.

(Translation). "On 15/2/1834 at Havalbagh, for the sake of or at the order of Bachua goldsmith signed in his own hand by Jwala Ram painter."

School if I were not able to discover Mola Ram's writings and autographed and dated paintings and drawings. Garhwal School would have not been known as a distinct and separate school which decidedly it is.

I met my Guru, Dr. Anand K. Coomaraswamy, at Banaras, in 1908, when I was a student at the Banaras Hindu College. He encouraged me in my pursuit of collecting information about Mola Ram and his art; I had the advantage that Mola Ram's descendants are my neighbours and friends. But their conservatism stood in my way of getting all the information I needed. I started my research in 1909. And I have been finding new materials even until now (1949). I have always discovered some fresh facts or pictures, drawings and documents, whenever I paid a visit to my ancestral home, Srinagar, and have had an opportunity to see my friends Balak Ram, Fate Ram and Tulsi Ram Balak Ram is still so active and alert even though he is now over 81 years of age. He frequently writes to me and answers to my querries. The last time, I saw him in my native town, Srinagar, was on 4th and 5th September 1949. I had gone to Srinagar specially to see Balak Ram and his cousins, Fate Ram and Tulsi Ram, great-great-grandsons of Mola Ram, and to procure fresh and more materials for my research on Mola Ram and Garhwal School. I have been able to obtain some most remarkable paintings and manuscripts which I will refer to in my writings. I have secured another signed half finished painting of Mola Ram in 'Mughal' style, which I am using in my "Study of Mola Ram and His Art", to prove that up to the age of about 30 Mola Ram painted in Mughal style and technique; and after that he started and continued painting in Rajput (Pahari) style.

(to be continued)

MĀNAKU, THE PAHARI PAINTER

BY

NĀNĀLĀL C. MEHTĀ

I first alighted upon the name of Mānaku on one of the pictures in the Tehri collection published in my 'Studies in Indian Painting'. These Tehri pictures dated obviously either from the end of the 18th or the beginning of the 19th century and were executed during the reign of Raja Sudarshan Shah. The same name of Mānaku was discovered in an illuminated panel in the Geeta Govinda series belonging to the Basholi school in the Lahore Museum. The verse was written in golden characters and formed an integral part of the picture. It ran as follows :—

Muni-vasu-giri-somaiḥ sammite Vikramabde
guna-ganita-garishṭā Mālinī-vritta-vittā
Vyarachayad-aja-bhaktā Manakū-chitrakartrā
Lalita-lipi-vichitram Gītagovindachitrau

As there were but few names known of Pahari artists, the discovery of Mānaku was of some interest. It is obvious that Mānaku must have been a painter of some note, for the artists working in the court of Tehri Garhwal ascribe some of the pictures to him. It is of course possible that there was another local Mānaku or Manak at the court of Garhwal.

I am, however, concerned with Mānaku—the author or the painter of the Basholi Gita Govinda. I had a considerable amount of discussion with the late Dr. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal about the exact meaning of this

simple verse, but despite its grammatical simplicity, there were some features which gave rise to a certain amount of difficulty. The literal meaning of the verse is as follows :—

"In the year 1787 V. S.=1730 A. D. Mālini, noted for her qualities of discrimination and judgment and who prized her character as her principal wealth, who was a devotee of the Immortal One (Vishnu) had a pictorial version of Gita Govinda in beautiful and varied script composed by the painter Mānaku".

This seems to be the simple, straightforward interpretation of the verse, but it is not free from difficulty. The language of the verse would permit of another interpretation, viz. that Manaku had the Gita Govinda illustrated by a painter and that Manaku had all the qualifications mentioned in the verse with the additional one of having been an expert in the use of Sanskrit metre—Malini—in which the verse given above has been composed. As we have no information whatsoever about Malini or Manaku except ~~the~~ the names, it matters but little whether the patron of this pictorial edition of Gita Govinda was one or the other. There is, however, no doubt that the patron was some distinguished lady—a worshipper of Vishnu, and of spotless character. Considering, however, that Manaku is a common and somewhat plebian name both for males and females in the hills, it would be more appropriate to consider Malini — some exceptionally talented princess of the Royal House of Basholi—as the patron of Mānaku—the painter.

It was an error on my part to have emended the language of the verse and interpreted it as if the name of the painter with all the attributes given in the first interpretation above was Manaku—a woman. It is true that in the hills the women have considerable freedom and that Manaku is a name both of men and women. But considering all the

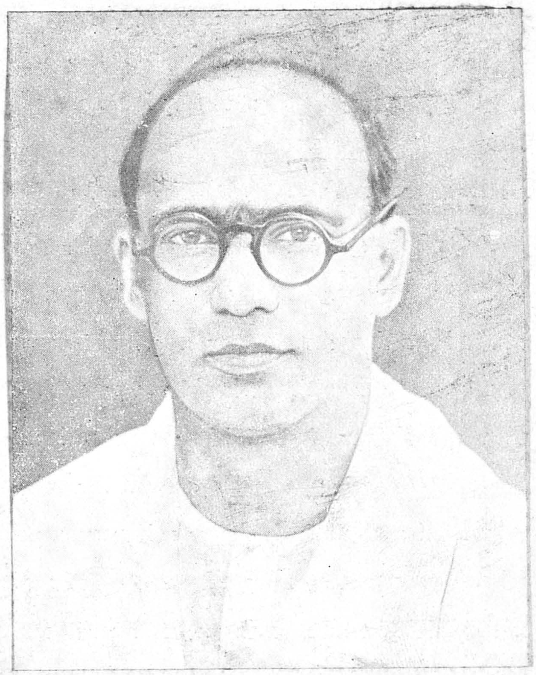
circumstances as well as the simple literary interpretation as given above, I think it may be accepted that Manaku was the name of the painter and that his patron was some lady of the princely house of Basholi. It should also be added that the date given in the verse, namely 1730 A. D. must be accepted as the authentic date of the composition of the Basholi Gita Govinda and it is more than likely that the date of a good many of the Kangra pictures must be pushed back by 30 to 50 years, for the Pahari School of painting rose to its zenith between 1740 and 1800 and that its extension and survival till the end of the first quarter of the 19th century was in the nature of local offshoots in the neighbouring hill States of Chamba, Basholi, Nurpur, Guler, Mandi, Kulu, Bilaspur, Suket, Sirmur and above all Garhwal.

Mr. Mukandi Lal has referred in detail to Mānaku, the author of the Garhwali paintings which I first published in my 'Studies in Indian Painting' in 1926. As previously pointed out, Mānaku or Mānak is a name common in the hills and it is very likely that there were more than one Manaku who painted in some of these Hill States, which were so rich in painting. It should be added that while the Garhwali picture has the name of Mānaku written in ink on its back, the Basholi Geeta Govinda in the Lahore Museum has the name of Mānaku illuminated in gold.

MADHAVA MENON,
The Painter From Kerala

By

KRISHNA CHAITANYA



ART is essentially the communication of feeling. This in itself contains no definitive prescription regarding technique. There are those who hold that the technical element should not be dwelt upon too much as otherwise the feeling will lose its nascent energy in the delayed communication. The spontaneous music of Verlaine and the rapid fluent handling of clay by Rodin show the truth of this view. On the other hand, the carefully wrought verses of Heredia and Leconte de l'Isle, or the patient work in hard resistant metal by Ghiberti or Cellini have shown that lyricism and dynamism need not necessarily be lost if a patient and painstaking technique is followed. Often, such loving care bestowed on technique conserves the purity of the lyrical feeling in a chastened form, making it less volatile. This would seem to be the artistic credo of Madhava Menon.

Menon, now in his early forties, hails from Cranganore, a port town in Kerala, which came in the orbit of Greco-Roman trade contacts

centuries ago. In early childhood he spent some years in Ceylon with a relative. On returning to India he joined the Theosophical Society's School at Adyar, Madras. Academic studies failed miserably in fascinating him, and he decided that there was no sense in continuing the self-torture. At Adyar, however, he came across a Bengali artist, A. P. Banerjee, who encouraged him to make studies from nature. After leaving Adyar, Menon went to Calcutta where he studied under Ramendra Nath Chakravarti. He rounded off his art education by spending some time at Santiniketan where Nandalal Bose taught him a perennially valid lesson: that in the profoundest sense of the word art can never be taught to any man by another and that discovery and cultivation of one's own capacities, and not imitation of the great, is the best way of dedicating oneself to art. In his twenty-first year Menon was awarded a year's scholarship by the Cochin Government to study painting in Madras under Devi Prasad Roy Choudhury. For several years now, Menon has been the Officer in charge of the Shree Chitralayam in Trivandrum.

The feeling for nature and animal life, as such, is probably a modern sentiment. Primitive art has given us some lovely animal studies, but painting during that phase in human evolution was ritualistc — associated with the rites that guaranteed success in hunting—and this anthropocentrism prevented any further development towards an art of nature, as such. In Europe the intense preoccupation with human destiny blotted out the skies and fields from medieval painting. During the renaissance gentle St. Francis of Assisi's love of nature and animal life helped to introduce blossoms into murals and canvas, at first shyly, as in Fra Angelico's *Annunciation*, and then later in the full strength of springtide as in Botticelli's *Primavera* with its beautiful woods and carpets of flowers. But in the prosperous commercial cities of Italy, the love of pomp and circumstance soon obliterated this tendency, and in painters like Benozzo Gozzoli we find curtains of cloth of gold drawn over the face of

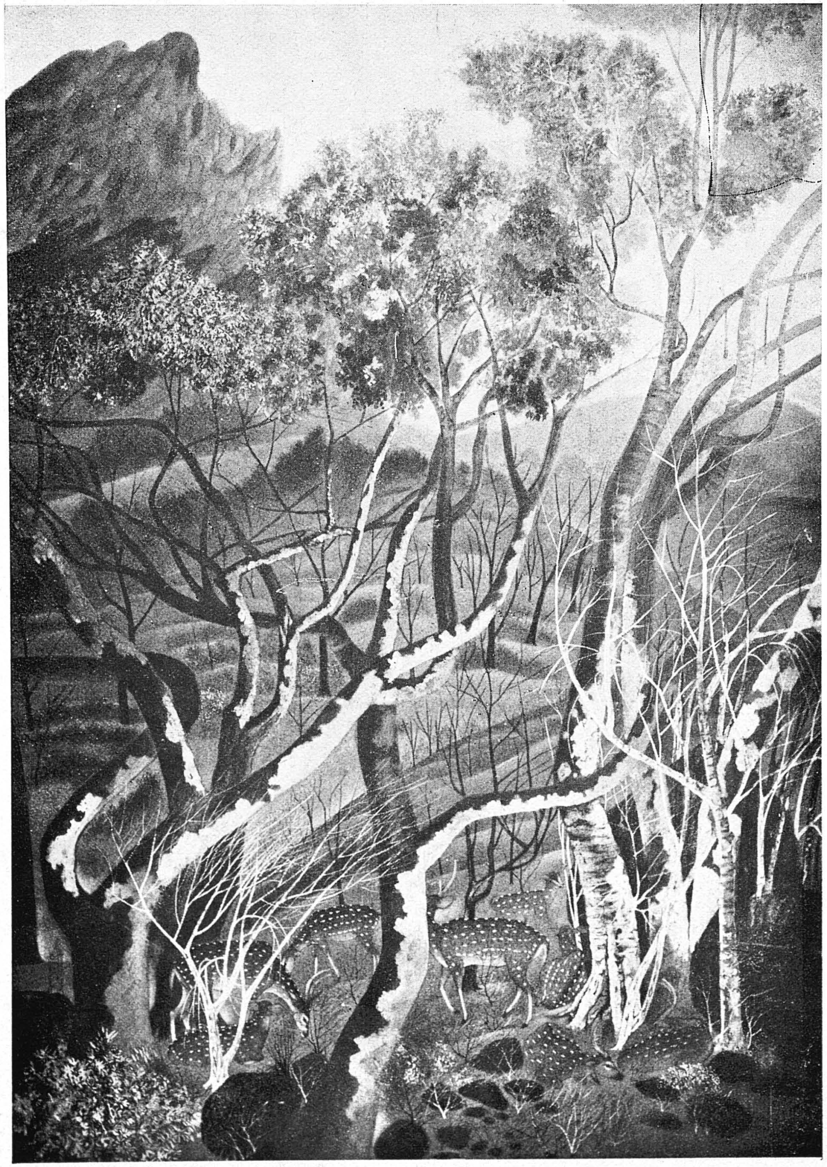
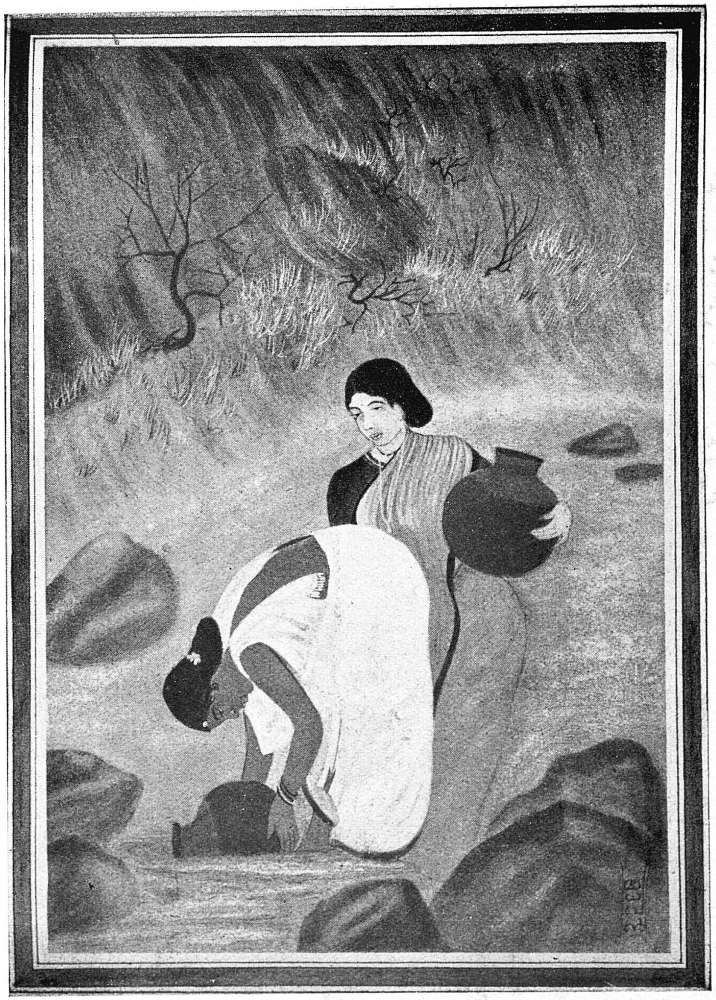


Plate 2. "Deer in the Park" —Madhava Menon.



" Filling the Pitcher "
—Madhava Menon.

Plate 4. "Bamboo Bush" —Madhava Menon.

Plate 1. "Bird on the Bough" (on silk)
—Madhava Menon, Travancore.

nature. We have to wait for the seventeenth century before the love of nature comes to the surface once again with Claude, and two more centuries have to pass before it finds it most magnificent development in the work of Constable, Crome and Cotman.

Similar is the case in the East. The glorious efflorescence of landscape painting in Sung period China was the product of a mellowed culture which had several millennia of development. And even nearer to our times is Hokusai of Japan, who could sit with his brush and paint a hundred pictures of Fujiyama.

In Ajanta the crowds of men and damsels and Gandharvas do not quite obliterate the shy insistent presence of natural and animal life. The elephants and richly caparisoned horses belong properly to the human cavalcade. But we come across monkeys in the woods and in one scene we see a Palasa tree in full bloom. A creeper has entwined itself round the tree in a friendly embrace and its single blossoms also appear among the clustered inflorescences of the Palasa. A train of ants is going up the tree to gather the honey. Such visions of the beauty of creation, close knit like a family, gathered together in a fertilising interdependence of the plant and animal worlds, are, however, rare. In Rajput painting things begin to change. The centre of attention is still the human figures. But nature begins to come into her own in these pictures, with rolling hills and lakes, blossoms and flowers. Even stormy skies with tongue like flames of lightning are represented, though their function is to dramatise the stealthy visit of a damsel to her paramour, or the loneliness of a woman waiting for her lover.

In Mughal painting we get still closer to the life of nature and the animal world. Jahangir was a keen naturalist. Ustad Mansur was ordered by him to paint as many flowers as he could find and over

a hundred are mentioned as painted in Jahangir's *Memoirs.* Mansur, again under Jahangir's constant prodding, is the greatest painter of animals and birds of the Mughal period.

Mansur's mantle seems to have fallen on Menon. In any case there is not another pair of artists who have agreed to see beauty in the ugly crow. There is however, a very important difference. Mansur seems to have conscientiously and deliberately regarded himself as an illustrator. And though his pictures are of a very high quality, they do not rise—since Mansur did not want them to rise—above the category of illustrations. A study of the formal organisation of his pictures will bear out the truth of this. In the picture of the Himalayan pheasant in the Rothschild collection, in that of the sparrows in the State Library, Berlin and again in the picture of the vulture in the Chester Beatty collection, the birds are deliberately positioned closest to the vision, filling the frames almost completely. The landscape, where it is not just sketchy and neutral as a background, is highly formalised for decorative effects. Menon adopts this method in the *Bengal Monkeys.* But even here, though the background is absent, the picture rises above a mere illustration by virtue of its compositional quality as well as by its fine brushwork. In the *Bird on the Bough* (Plate 1.) and *Deer in the Park* (Plate 2.) the environment and background gain in proportion, but the movement is in the direction of realism, not decorative stylisation. The *Squirrel* illustrates the finest development of this movement in the informal, spontaneous quality of its composition.

The same characteristics can be seen in Menon's studies of flowers or landscapes. In the *Spirit of Nagalinga flower* (Plate 3.) the mood is poetical and the result decorative; but Menon, even when he sees blossoms at such close quarters, as in his studies of the lotus, does not usually create myths out of them. In the *Temple Tree in Bloom* he steps back

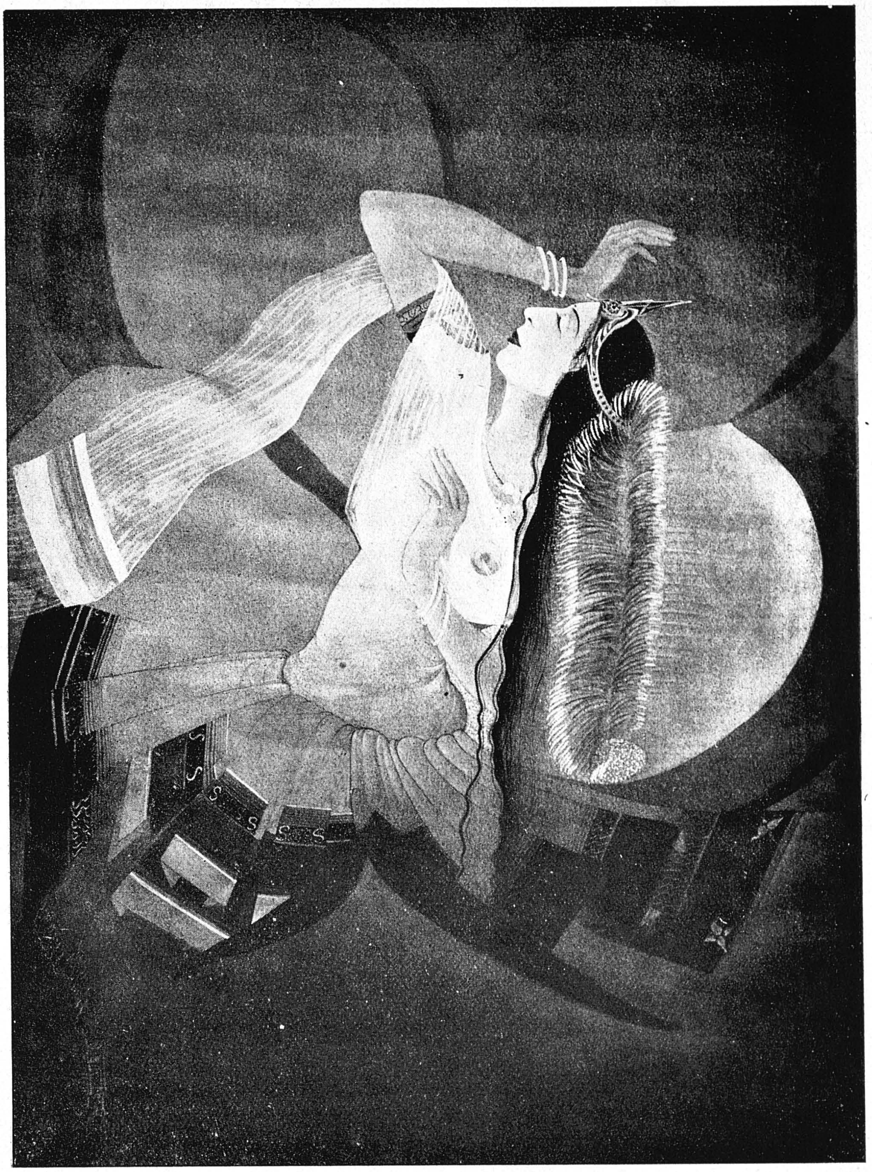
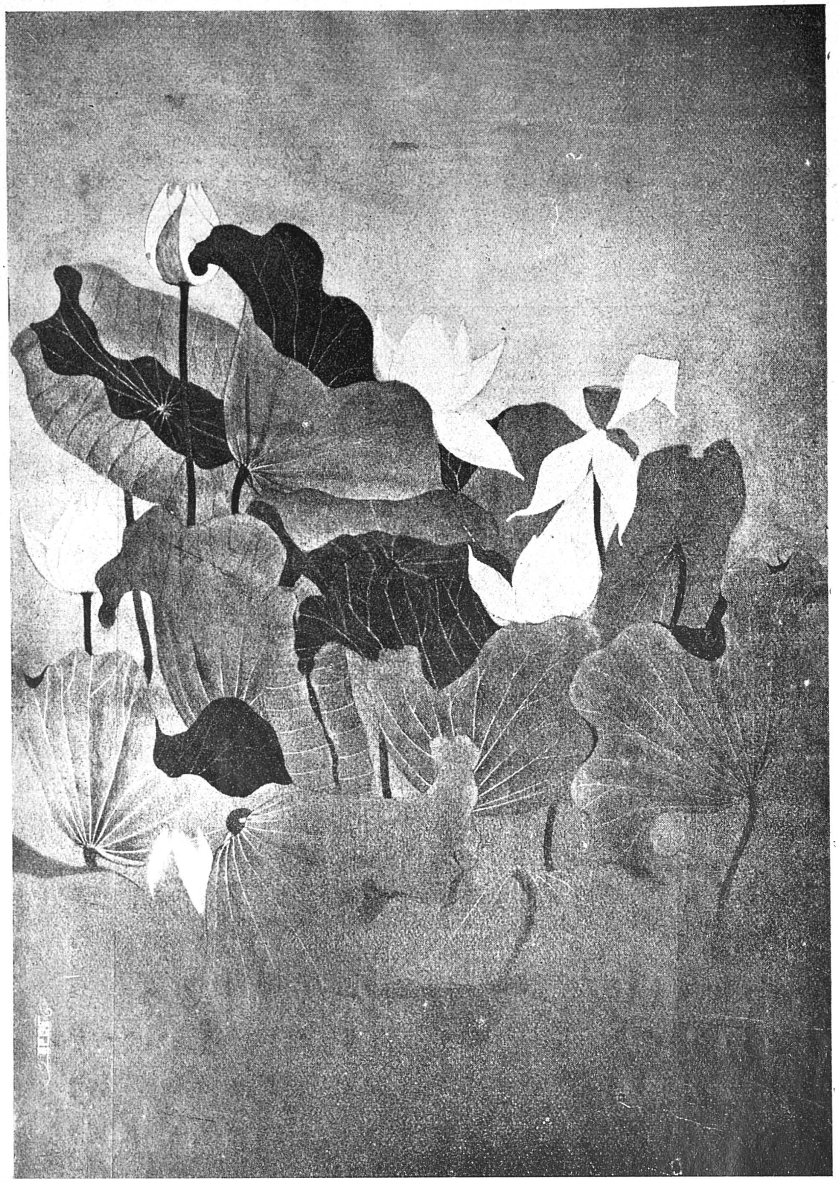


Plate 3. "The Spirit of Nagalinga flower"
—Madhava Menon.



"White Lotus"
By
Madhava Menon,

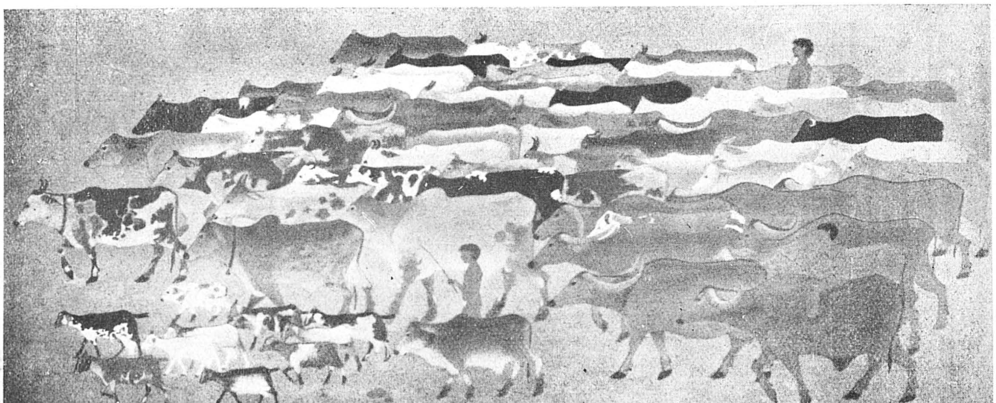


Plate 5. " Homeward Bound " (Go-dholi) —Madhava Menon.

several paces from his object so that he can take in, not a single bunch of blossoms or a twig, but the whole tree. And though a background is absent and the tree is the single motif in the picture, the patient care devoted to the drawing of the branches and leaves gives to the piece a high compositional quality, making it a painting rather than an illustration. And in the *Bamboo-bush* (Plate 4), the informal realism of the piece conserves the lyricism of feeling in undiminished strength although it is achieved by a most painstaking brushwork.

It would not, therefore, be proper to term Menon a modern Mansur. While there are affinities with the Mughal painter, there are very important differences, and in any case, Mughal tradition is not his only heritage. *Homeward Bound* (Plate 5) links itself with, not the Mughal, but the many Rajput paintings which are built on the theme of the hour of cow-dust (*Go-dhuli*). And in the flat treatment of forms and tendency to silhouette it goes back even further, to the specimens of primitive art which have survived in bushmen caves. Dominating the derived theme and stylistic elements, however, is the rhythmical organisation built round the human figure in the foreground, which stamps the piece with the individuality of its creator.

SCHEME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN ART*

BY

JAGADISH CHANDRA KHANNA

MAN as an evolving mental being has travelled far from his hairy animal past when all his activities and interests were centred round the demands of his primary instincts — food, sex and self - preservation.

Civilised man even in the earliest stages of his mental development felt that apart from these vital instincts in him, there was something in him, a part of his being which yearned and aspired for things higher, Beauty, Harmony and Truth and was thrilled to the depths by their ethereal touch.

Exquisite carvings in stone of animal figures have been discovered in some of the pre-historic grottos in Spain which exhibit these urges and artistic trends even in the primitive cave men yet hardly emerged from the savage.

Quest for beauty, no less than that for goodness and knowledge is ingrained in the human soul for is it not a manifestation of the Supreme Artist (Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram), the creator of the starry firmament and the crimson dawn, the blue lotus and the peacock feather ?

Any scheme for the development of human personality, therefore, which ignores this imperious urge of man, the mental and the aesthetic

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From A. B. Patrika, Allahabad, the 22nd October, 1949.

"The Malabar Belle"

By—B. N. Jijja

no less than the vital being, will not only stunt his true growth by imposing an atrophe on his higher centres, but ultimately fail in its very aim.

The ancient civilisations, it must be said to their credit, were fully alive to this truth. In our own country, for example, music, the arts and poetry were as necessary a part of the education of the youth as the sciences and the art of man.

Their aim in education was not only to enable him to hold his own in the struggle for existence but equip him to rise higher above his every day world of strife and pain, of vital desires and their counterpart, frustration and sorrow, to the tranquil heights of the spirit and discover his true stature — his oneness with the source of all Joy, Beauty, Knowledge and Bliss.

It was in art too that they discovered 'a wonderful magic power of stilling the restless grosser passions, of instilling a distaste for the rough, uncouth and excessive in action and manner and restraining both feeling and action by a striving after the decent, the beautiful, the fit and seemly'.

Art Purifies Feelings

Aristotle speaks of art as the matchless alchemy through which the Divine affects the "Katharsis", the purification of the feelings, passions and emotions, without which the upward ascent of man is not possible. And the Sanskrit poets hail it as "Kantasammita", the voice of the Beloved which stirs us to our depths by its very sweetness, which elevates and illumines yet does not preach. For such indeed is the function of art.

To-day, however, a soulless and mercenary system prevails. How gravely this soulless foreign system of education has affected us can be judged from the intellectual equipment of an average graduate who, to quote Havell's words, "is less equipped artistically than a Pacific Islander."

Having no artistic or aesthetic training he looks at the masterpieces of Ajanta and Ellora, the great Trimurti at Elephanta, the sublime temples of Tanjore and the rest, with blank stupefaction, impressed at best by their external size and form, but completely ignorant of the profundity of their concept.

It is this serious neglect of a vital aspect of education that we have to rectify. 'It is not necessary that every man should be a professional artist. It is necessary, however, that every man have his artistic faculty developed, his taste trained, his sense of beauty and insight into form and colour activised and corrected.'

" A nation ", in the inimitable words of Sri Aurobindo, "surrounded daily by the beautiful, noble, fine and harmonious, becomes that which it is habituated to contemplate, and realises the fullness of the expanding spirit in itself. The spirit of Indian art must be revived,................the inborn skill and taste of the race and the intuitive gaze of the Indian eye must be recovered and the whole nation lifted again to the high level of the ancient culture and higher."

An ambitious scheme dealing with this important subject is now receiving the attention of the Central Government. It has been formulated by Mr. Barada Ukil, the founder of the All-India Fine Arts and Crafts Society and is sponsored by the latter. I shall give below some of the salient features of the scheme, which to begin with will be a five years one. Mr. Ukil suggests:

Fine Arts Compulsory

(1) Fine Arts (Drawing and Paintings) should be introduced as a compulsory subject in both the Primary and Secondary Schools, and as an optional subject in the University Degree course like other optional subjects in the University Degree.

(2) Remodelling ot the Art Schools in the country to suit our cultural heritage and establishing Art Institutions in all such Provinces where there exists no such institution at present.

(3) Establishment of Museums and Art Galleries in Provincial capitals to house specimens of Museum collections and fine arts respectively. The educational institutions should be directed to send their students by batches, to view and study the exhibits in their local Museums and Art Galleries by rotation and at regular intervals under proper escorts.

(4) Founding of separate Directorate of Arts in every Province, under the Central Government's Department of Education and Arts.

(5) A team of six qualified Indians (composed of artists and art-critics) should be sent to Europe, America, China and Japan, for securing first hand knowledge of the conditions of Museums and Art Galleries in these places, so that their expert knowledge may be successfully utilized in the construction of our National Museums and Art Galleries with such modifications as may be deemed proper in view of our own national outlook and traditions.

Scholarships

(6) Awarding of scholarships by Provincial Governments to talented young artists for post-graduate studies in foreign countries,

condition being that the Governments shall have first lien on their services.

(7) All educational institutions should be directed to purchase a fixed minimum number of coloured facsimile reproductions and enlarged photographs of famous Art works of the country — ancient and modern — for display in their libraries and common rooms for study of students.

The last suggestion is the pivot, round which the entire scheme revolves, and is worth considering in detail.

According to Sir John Sargent's report there were 2,18,795 recognised Educational Institutions in British India in 1936-37, excluding the Indian States. Assuming that 50 per cent of the above institutions are now left with the Indian Union, there would be, say, 1,05,000 institutions in the country.

Of these 1,00,000 are in Group "A" i. e. Primary, Middle English and Middle Vernacular Schools and 5,000 in Group "B" i. e. High Schools and Colleges. Institutions in Group "A" will be required to purchase 15 pictures each—all properly framed in one standard size at Rs. 4 each, payment to be made by instalments. Those in Group "B" will likewise purchase 30 framed pictures each at Rs. 7 per picture, payment to be made by instalments.

The total receipts from the sale of these pictures according to the figures supplied by Mr. Ukil would come to Rs. 70.5 lakhs. The authorities of the institutions will be able to recover the entire amount of their respective contributions by collecting a monthly subscription of one anna per student for 20 months and 32 months by Group "A" and "B" institutions respectively—even by making an allowance of 25

Caravan Music V. Masoji, Shantiniketan

(Exhibited at the Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul)

Alone — Ishwar Dass, Lucknow

(Exhibited at the Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul)

per cent of the total number of students in case of poor students, who cannot contribute even one anna per month.

The pictures are to be produced in bulk and an additional income of about Rs. 2 lakhs can be made, explains Mr. Ukil, by publication of portfolios of 10 pictures each (out of the surplus pictures) with short notes and life sketches of the artists. The net income, thus, after deducting all the expenses would come to Rs. 18,00,000.

This sum of Rupees 18 lakhs, suggests Mr. Ukil, will be a material contribution towards the financial commitments involved in implementing the other suggestions.

The scheme is certainly ingenious in that it is self-supporting to a considerable extent. The suggestions pertaining to the hanging of famous Indian paintings in the institutions can be put into effect immediately. Visual study, as acknowledged by psychologists all over has a direct appeal to the juvenile mind and its importance needs no emphasis.

Atmosphere of Beauty

If the children in the Primary and Secondary schools and the boys in the High Schools and Colleges are brought up in proper artistic surroundings it will help cultivate that aptitude for art which is latent in them. The pictures on the walls will besides create that atmosphere of beauty and grace which is so conspicuous by its absence to-day in these institutions.

The poet said of the child that "grew in sun and shower"—

"And beauty born of murmuring sound shall pass into her face".

Even so the beauty of artistic creation, when we live in it steals into our consciousness and works a subtle change in our nature by elevating and refining it. The effect of the pictures on the minds of of the boys when they are in their most impressionable and formative stage, will be incalculable.

As for the construction of art galleries and museums in all big cities, I believe Mr. Ukil would not be over anxious for their construction in these exceptionally stringent times. The idea should, however, be taken up as soon as the present conditions of shortage of building material are relieved.

It is time also that the westward craze, born of a complex of inferiority and blind apeing of the West should give place to a healthy self-confidence in our own cultural heritage and innate artistic genius.

In an illuminating article appearing in the Modern Review, some time back, Dr. Tarak Nath Das dwelt at length on the huge waste of money involved in the education of hundreds of our young men abroad. He suggested that if absolutely necessary it would be better for Indian Universities to borrow the services of Western teachers for specified periods till such time that our own teachers come up to the requisite standard than to spend so much annually and with such little actual profit to the students.

What is true of scientific studies where the Western Universities lead in laboratory equipment and other facilities, applies with still greater justification to education of art. It is not implied however, that we adopt an insular attitude and cut ourselves adrift from the world trends but only that we shed our inhibitions and realise what a wealth of art is lying here

Female head

Poet Rabindranath Tagore

From Protima Devi Collection

The Dancers

Susil Sarkar

(Exhibited at the Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul)

Labourers near the Delhi Gate — Satyen Ghosal, Delhi

(Exhibited at the Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul)

Indian Games — Miss S. S. Anandkar, Bombay

(Exhibited at the Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul)

in our own country waiting to be tapped and which needs our close study.

Foreign Study

Mr. Ukil agreed with me that our students should go abroad only when they had first delved deep into their own founts and come out saturated with our own great cultural heritage.

The suggestion about the introduction of art as a compulsory subject of study in the primary and secondary schools and an optional one in the colleges, however, needs the earliest attention of our educationists and the Government.

It is reassuring that the Ministry of Education under the Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is keenly aware of this problem. In a speech, recently, at the opening of the Indian Art Exhibition he said, "I must confess that art education has been sadly neglected in our country, whether as a repository of ancient history or an embodiment of the visions of beauty that have moved men.

"No doubt students are sometimes taken and sometimes themselves go to Museums like the Indian Museum at Calcutta and other museums, in Jaipur, Mysore or Hyderabad. Such visits are, however, perfunctory and occasional, and there is no effort to integrate the study of art into the scheme of our general studies.

"The Ministry of Education have proposals in hand which will lead to the enrichment of our life through the integration of art in education, both secondary and university, but the implementation of the the plans will take some time."

It is to be hoped that the time will be as short as possible and that the urgency of the problem is not lost sight of.

REVIEWS:

Paintings Of

ISHWAR DASS:

Introduction by the late Manu Thacker

Times of India Press, Bombay.

Ishwar Dass belongs spiritually to the renaissance ushered in Indian painting by Dr. Abanindra Nath Tagore, and this fine volume of reproductions attests to the leading place he has acquired by his talents among the younger generation of workers who were inspired by the leaders like Tagore and Haldar.

Poetic, aristocratically reserved yet warmly human, Ishwar Dass's art reflects the syncretic culture of the United Provinces with a nostalgia for old modes of living, now irrecoverably swept away by the river of time. The Mugal epoch is his inspiration, but his fancy is not imprisoned within the jasmine tower. It flows down to transmute with a touch of poetry the life of the middle class of that epoch.

His technical competence is established. In *Toilet* and *Ragini Malvi*, the rhythm of the feminine figure is captured with a greater correctness than is usual with Renaissance painters. The *Night* evokes a poetic mood through sheer colour beauty and in *Disunited Cords*, the note of tragedy owes its impact to a studied understatement.

— KRISHNA CHAITANYA

NOTES & NEWS:

INDIAN ART EXHIBITION IN KABUL—

"The Indian Government and the Art Society of India have taken a further step towards strengthening the relations between Afghanistan and India which have existed from the earliest times. We Afghans accord our warmest welcome to the opening of this exhibition", said H. R. H. Sardar Mahmud Khan Ghazi, Prime Minister of Afghanistan, opening the exhibition of Indian art organised by the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, under the auspices of the Indian Embassy, Kabul, at Habibia College on August 20.

Earlier H. E. Shri Rup Chand, India's Ambassador in Afghanistan, in his speech referred to the active inter-change of goods and ideas between India and Afghanistan during antiquity, and to Gandhara art, a synthesis of Indian, Afghan and Greek art. He thanked Mr. Anil Roy Choudhury and Mr. K. K. Nair, Secretary and Hony. Joint Secretary of the A. I. F. A. C. S., for bringing the exhibition personally to Kabul and expressed the hope that the exhibition would initiate again fertilizing contacts between India and Afghanistan.

The opening ceremony was attended, among others, by Ministers and officials of the Afghan Government and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Afghanistan and India have been close associates since the period in remote antiquity when Aryans settled down in the valleys of Afghanistan and the Punjab. Many of the leading geographical names in Afghanistan are monuments of this historic epoch. For example, Kandhar is Gandhara, Kabul is Kubha, Balkh is Bahlika, Oxus is Vakshu and Argandab is Archaoiti of the Avesta and Saraswati of the Rigveda. Even the name 'Afghan' is Aryan being derived from Asvakayana, an important tribe of the Asvakas or horsemen who must have derived this title from their fine handling of the celebrated breeds of Gandhara horses. The very word 'Pakhto' by which the language of the Afghans is known, comes from the Rigveda word 'Pakthana,' the equivalent of the modern word 'Pakhtoon'. The grammatical structure of the Pakhto language remains essentially Aryan even today.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF ARCH...
27 NOV 1972

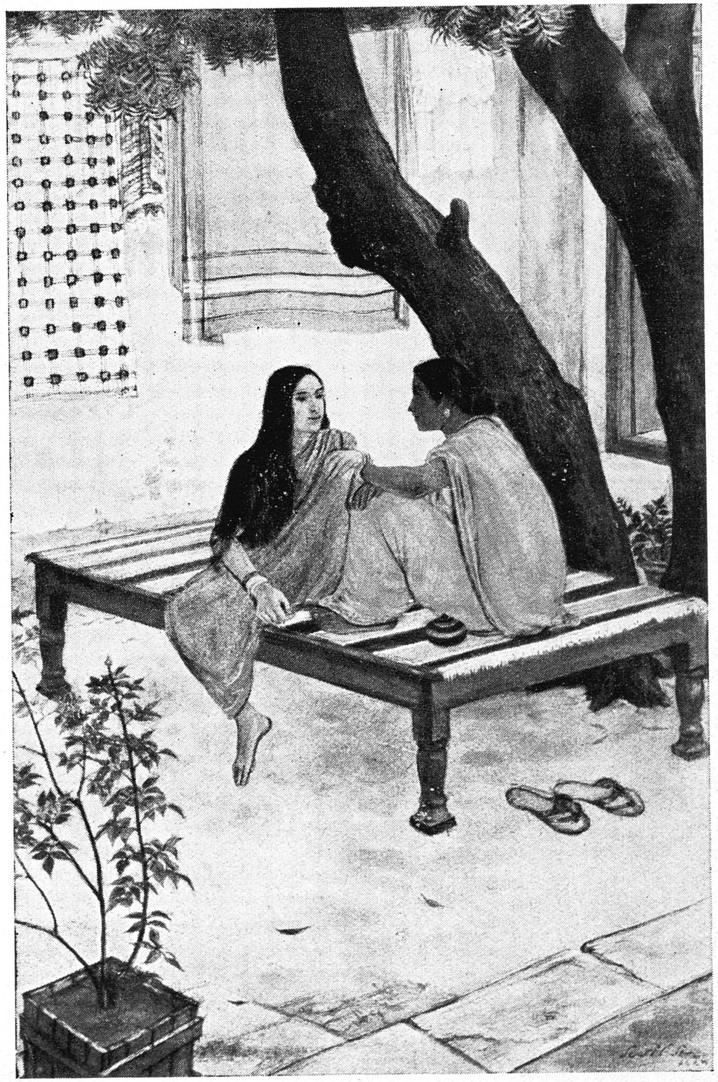
The most important trade route of antiquity, namely the northern route (Uttarapatha) linked up the great capital cities of Central India like Mathura, Kasi and Pataliputra with Peshawar, the Kabul Valley and beyond. The exchange of merchandise and artware along this great trunk route must have been brisk, for it is in Afghanistan, at Begram, 50 miles north of Kabul, that the greatest collection of Indian ivory carvings ever discovered, has been unearthed. These carvings, preserved in the Kabul Museum and the Musee Guimet at Paris, are impressive specimens of the superb craftsmanship of the ancient ivory carvers of Mathura.

The highlight of the exhibition consisted of contemporary paintings contributed by about 130 artists from every region of India. The J. J. School of Arts, Bombay and the Government Schools of Arts at Calcutta and Madras had cooperated in the selection and paintings had also been taken on loan from private collections like the Protima Tagore Collection, the Asit Haldar Collection, the Salar Jung Collection, Hyderabad Museum Collection, University Library Collection, Lucknow, the Patiala Maharajah's Collection and from the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Special rooms were allotted for oils, water colour, tempera, pastel, pencil drawings and etchings. The historic evolution of Indian sculpture and paintings was illustrated by a collection of about 100 photographic enlargements. Photographs of sculpture included those of steatite seals and figurines of the pre-Aryan civilisation, Asokan Capitals, Gandhara sculpture, Gupta period statuary, Chola bronzes and 18th and 19th century wood carvings from South India. Photographs of paintings included reproductions of Ajanta frescos, seventh century murals from Sittaannavasal, sixteenth century murals from Travancore and Cochin, Mughal miniatures, Rajasthani and Pahari works and folk paintings.

The exhibition, which came to a close on August 30, drew heavy crowds especially as it coincided with the Afghan Independence week. Though the opening hours were announced as 9 a. m. to 12 noon and 2 p. m. to 6 p. m. the exhibition had to be kept open from 9 a. m. to 8 p. m. every day due to the heavy rush of visitors. The exhibition received very enthusiastic response from the Afghan public, particularly the student community.

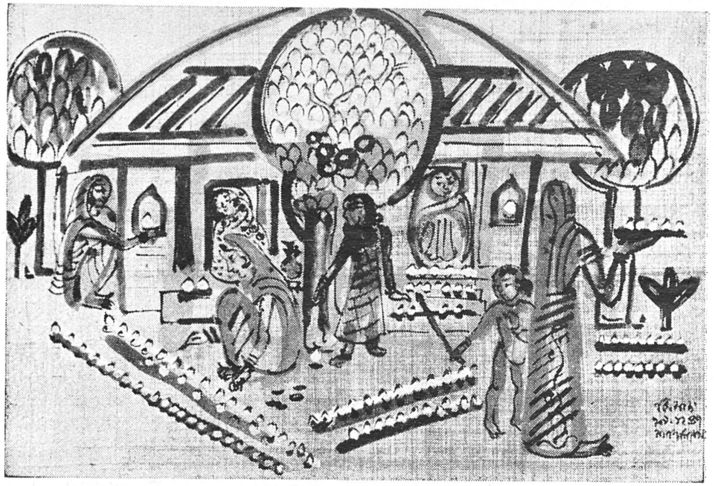
The room reserved for photos of Gandhara sculpture was particularly popular as it took one back to the time when the cultural intercourse between Afghanistan and India saw one of its most active phases. The floodtide of

"Cycle of life" Late Sarada Ukil
(Hyderabad Museum Collection)

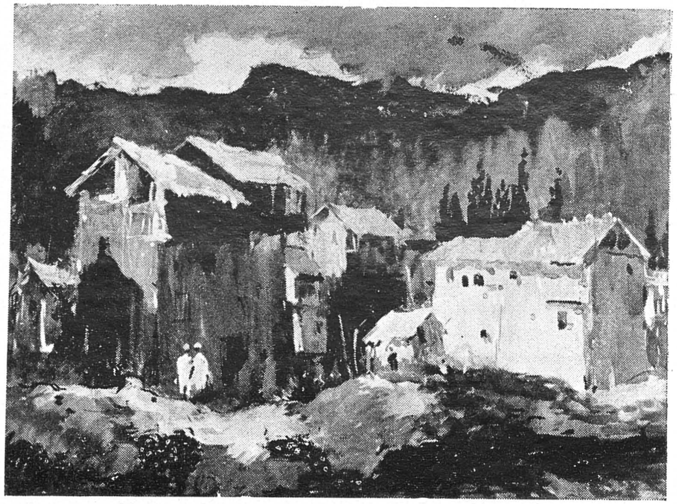


"Gossip" Susil Sen

Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul



"Deepavali" Benode Mukerjee



Landscape (Kashmir) S H. Raja

Bamboo Bush Gopal Ghosh

From Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul

Alexander's conquest of Western Asia left the rich silt of Hellenism, fertile to new growths. Under the Seleucids, the Greco-Bactrian kingdom with its capital in present-day Balkh in Afghanistan became the "empire of thousand cities" of Greek historians. To the south was Purushapura, modern Peshawar, capital of the Kingdom of Gandhara ruled over by the powerful Kushans. The ebb and flood of conquest confused the frontiers between the countries. If Menander extended his sway down to the Indus, Kanishka extended it up to the Kabul valley. And posterity, wisely ignoring the changes in military history and taking into account only the continuity in the growth of a synthetic culture, has chosen to describe the art of the whole region as Gandhara art.

In 1833, Dr. Gerard discovered the first known example of this Indo-Bactrian art, a circular relief of Buddha, from the chamber of a ruined stupa near Kabul. Subsequent researches by Cunningham, Sir E. C. Bayley, Dr. Leitner and others have unearthed specimens in abundance. Buddhism, which began to spread just at the time when communication was established between India and the Hellenic Middle East, is the inspiration of this art, while the forms evolved in Greece are the basis of the material incarnation of the inspiration.

The exhibition was especially popular with students who recorded their reactions in Persian, English, French or German in the Visitors' Book. A student of the Istiqlal College wrote: "I like India's art because it was similar to Afghan art and it shows the very old relationship between the two countries". Students of the Istiqlal College and other Afghan schools expressed their "cordial thanks" to the Indian Government for sending the exhibition which one described as "the best exhibition" organised in Kabul. Mr. Ibrahim Safa, Editor of the *Mujjala-e-Iqtisad*, an economic journal, and a poet of repute, wrote that contemporary work showed Indian art in transition and "assured one of the leading place this sub-continent is going to occupy in world art." Members of the various foreign missions in Kabul have also recorded their appreciation in the Visitors' Book.

THE AFGHAN ART ASSOCIATION—

The Afghan Art Association is a new body formed by the artists and art lovers of Afghanistan to promote art activities in that country and cultural co-operation with India. The Executive Committee consists of Mr. Abdul Ghafur Brechna, Director of the Nijat College, Kabul, as President; Madame Simonne Choukour, Professor of Art, Lycee de Jeunes Filles, Kabul and Mr. G. L. Puri, Cultural Relations Officer, Indian Embassy, Kabul, as Honorary Secretaries and the following as members: Dr. Abdul Choukour Wali, Professor of the Faculty of Science, University of Kabul; Mr Ghausuddin, Mr. Mohd. Humayun, Mrs. Roopchand and Mr Abdulla Brechna. The following are some of the resolutions passed unanimously at the meeting held at Kabul on September 5, 1949.

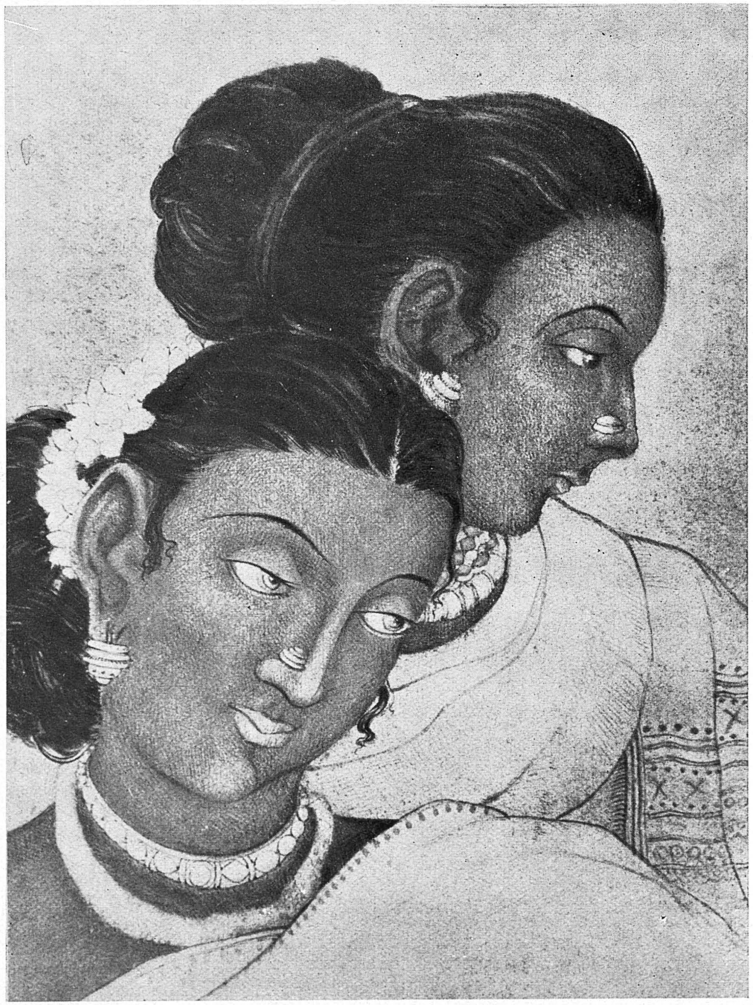
"Resolved that the artists and art lovers of Afghanistan constitute themselves as an independent Afghan Art Association which is joined to the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society as a sister organisation with headquarters in Kabul.

"The Afghan Art Association will function as the local representative of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society in Kabul and will work for cultural co-operation between the two countries.

"Resolved that the Committee of the Afghan Association approaches H. R. H. the Prime Minister, H. E. the Indian Ambassador and H. E. the Education Minister to bestow their protection to the Afghan Art Association by accepting patronship over it.

"Resolved that H. R. H. the Prime Minister is approached with a view to organise an exhibition of Afghan art and crafts in New Delhi in the coming winter."

The All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society was represented at this meeting by Mr. Anil Roy Chowdhury, Secretary and Mr. K. K. Nair, Hony. Joint Secretary.

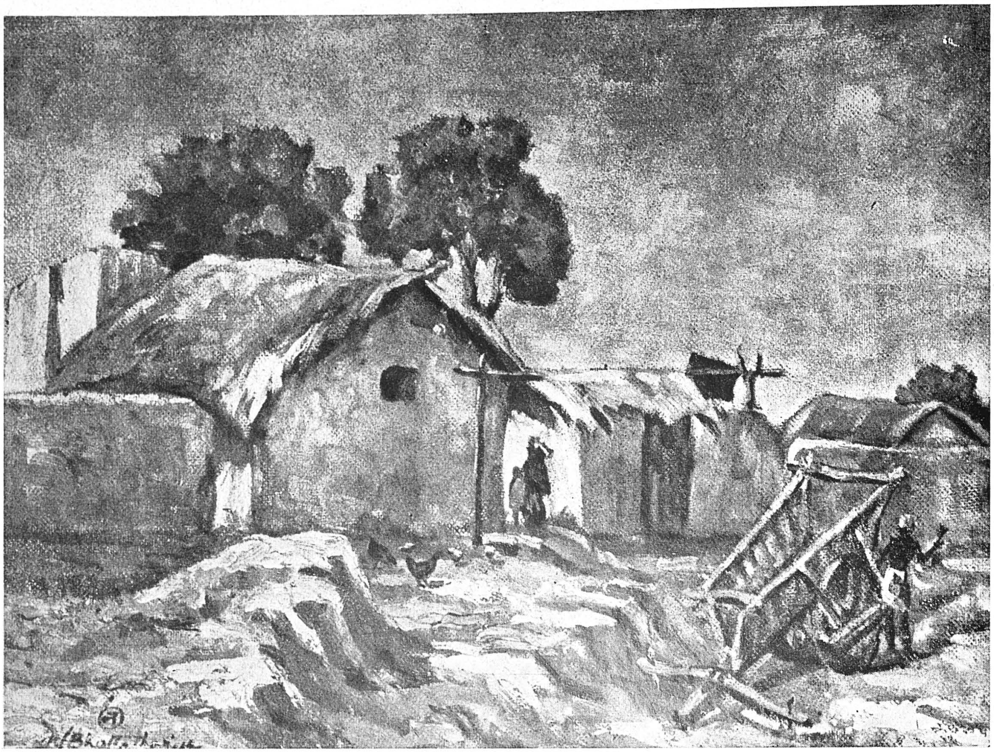


Two Sisters — Anil Roy Choudhury

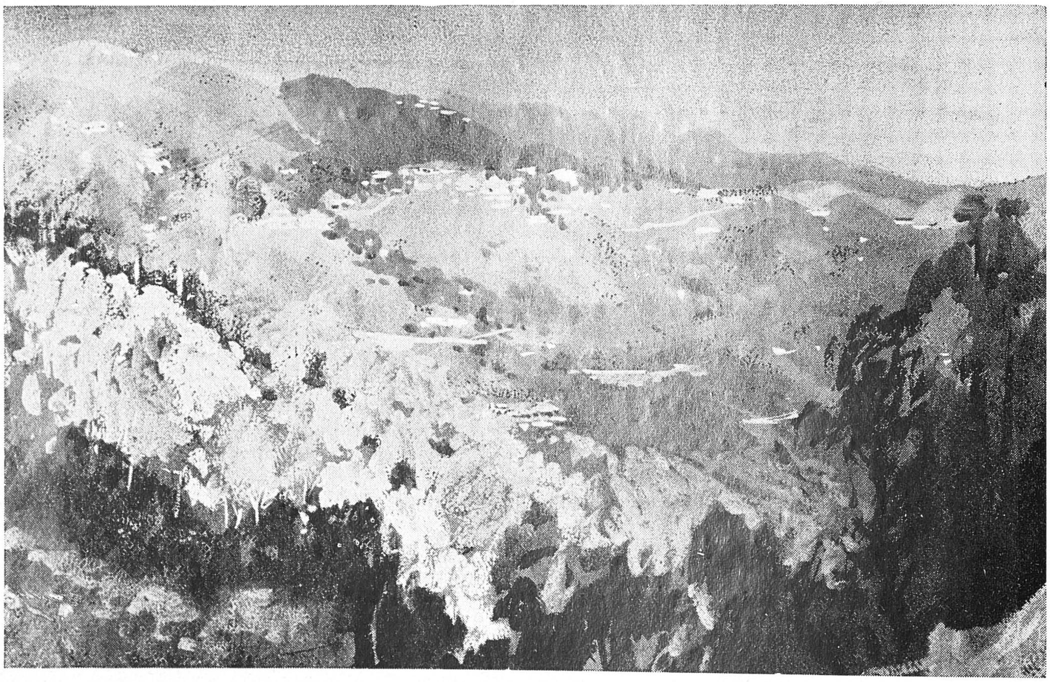
Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul

"Lakshmi" — Sunil Paul

1949 Travelling Art Exhibition



Village Corner — Nagen Bhattacharyya



Landscape — N. S. Bendre

From Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul

CALCUTTA ART CONFERENCE—

An All India Conference was sponsored by the Government of India, Ministry of Education, at Calcutta on the 29th and 30th August, 1949. The Conference was held in the Government House and was presided over by the Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Minister of Education.

One of the highlights of the Conference was an Exhibition of the works of young artists, not above 35 years of age, from all over India who had competed for the 8 scholarships offered by the Government of India for the current year. The Exhibition was organised at the Government School of Art, Calcutta. A Committee of Judges composed of the Principals of Government Schools of Art in India was appointed by the Ministry of Education to award the scholarships. Prof. Humayun Kabir, Joint Educational Adviser, was the Chairman. The Judging Committee awarded the scholarships of Rs. 2,500/- each, to the following:

1. Manick Lal Banerjee, ex-student, Government School of Art (Calcutta)— "Autumn Festival."
2. Dhirendra Nath Brahma, ex-student, Government School of Art, (Calcutta)— "Chaturbarna."
3. Mrs. Namita Ghosal, ex-student, Government School of Art (Calcutta)— "Sanghamitrar Singhal Jatra."
4. Gopen Roy, ex-student, Government School of Art (Calcutta)— "Santhal Girl."
5. S. H. Raza (Bombay). "A Landscape".
6. C. P. Saxena (Central India). "Huts."
7. L. P. Khona (Bombay). "India Tomorrow."
8. S. B. Palsikar (Bombay). "A Rural Scene."

"It is a sad commentary on our present system of education that art has either no place or plays a very minor role in our general education," said

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Education Minister, Government of India, in his Presidential address at the All-India Conference on Arts which opened at the Government House, Calcutta on August 29, 1949.

Maulana Azad pointed out to the divorce between arts and crafts which was one of the unfortunate results of the Industrial Revolution, the social insecurity of the artist in the modern world and the exteriorisation of culture due to the absence of a rich nurture of the emotional life of the child. He stressed the immediate utility of art education in developing manual skill and perceptive sensibility and its long range contribution to the development of the finer aspects of personality. The Education Minister announced that the Government had acquired valuable exhibits from several well known private collections for the National Museum and stated that there was a proposal to secure such of India's art heritage as had gone out of the country and might be available on reasonable terms. He also favoured the idea of establishing an Academy of Arts more or less on the lines of the world famous French Academy.

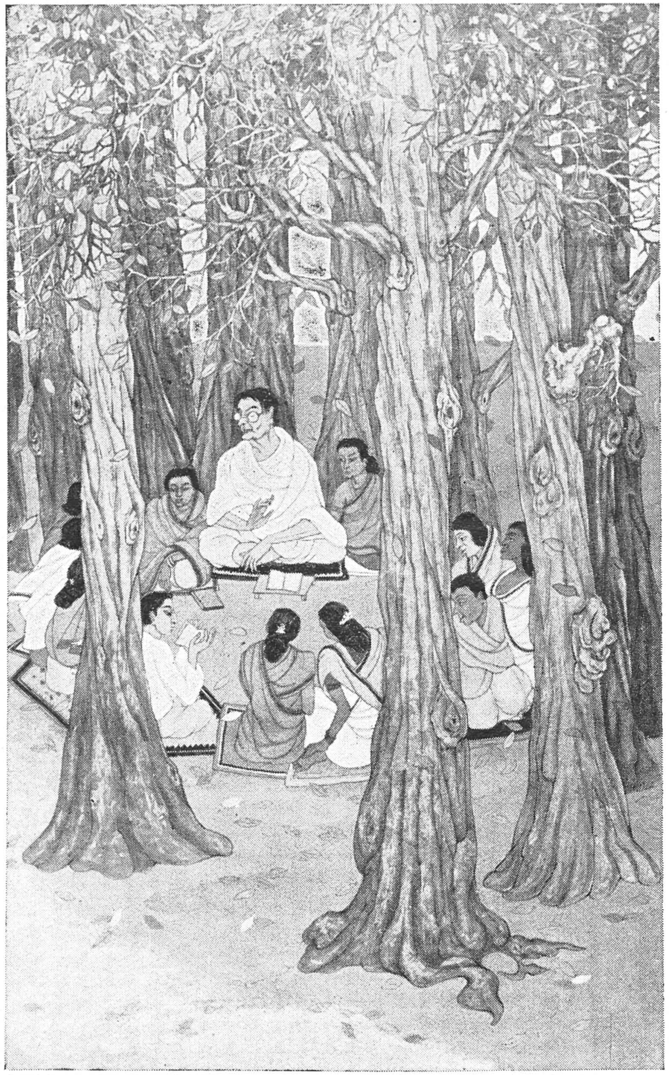
His Excellency Dr. K. N. Katju, Governor of West Bengal, who inaugurated the Conference, traced the history of the social origins and relations of art and said that artists should try to enrich the life of the common people. The welcome address was delivered by Sjt. Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri, Education Minister, West Bengal. Dr. Tara Chand, Secretary, Minister of Education, Government of India, in his address to the Conference said that the Government had no intention of introducing regimentation in the field of art but was merely concerned with the removal of the obstacles which hindered today the growth of a national art.

The Conference resolved that regional surveys of indigenous art including folk art painting, sculpture, bronze casting, wood carving—should be undertaken and authoritative handbooks concerning designs and technique, methods and material used in India should be published. The session also suggested that

Woman opening the door — Nandalal Bose
(Lucknow University Library Collection)

"Expectation"
B. N. Jijja

Rajgir — Hirachand Duggar



Class in Shalbani (Santineketan)   Kumaril Swami

His Pet   S. G. Sampat

(Salar Jung Collection)

From Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul

art schools and institutions of Applied Art should collect Indian designs from Indian plastic art and architecture and also from traditional methods of decoration of floors and walls, for example Rangoli and Alpana, practised in different parts of the country, and endeavour to popularise these designs in schools and homes and also in Indian arts and crafts. The Conference also recommended that the surroundings of schools and public institutions should be so designed as to educate and improve the aesthetic tastes and standards of the public. Municipal and District Boards as well as Universities were requested to give encouragement to Indian art by employing Indian artists in decorating the buildings.

The Conference set up a Select Committee which will submit the constitution for a Central Advisory Board of Art and the names of the people whom they recommend to be on it. The select Committee consists of Messrs O. C. Gangoly (Calcutta), N. C. Mehta (Himachal Pradesh), G. Venkatachalam (Bangalore), D. P. Roy Choudhury (Madras), Asit Haldar (Lucknow), and V. S. Amberkar (Bombay).

We shall discuss further the other aspects of the Art Conference in full details in the next issue of the "Roopa-Lekha" as by then the Government of India's report on the All India Art Conference will be available to us.

PERIODICAL ART EXHIBITIONS—

Our Society's Periodical Art Exhibitions of the session opened with the exhibition of paintings, drawings, architectural designs and crafts of the Maharastrian Group, Delhi, from the 14th August 1949. Since then the Society has so far held 10 such exhibitions of paintings, drawings and sculptures in the Exhibition Hall up to December 15, 1949. Details of these exhibitions are as follows :—

1. Exhibition of Maharastrian Arts & Crafts was opened by Hon'ble Mr. N. V. Gadgil, Minister of Works, Mines and Power, on the 14th August and lasted until the 18th August 1949.

2. The Andhra Chitrakala Parishat's Exhibition began from the 3rd September 1949 and lasted for a week. The Exhibition was opened by Dr. S. N. Sen, Rector of the Delhi University.

3. The third Exhibition of the series was a "group-artists show" of the works of A. B. Ghogale of Poona and Asoke Mukerjee of Calcutta. Hon'ble

Mr. Diwakar, performed the opening on the 13th September. The Exhibition continued for a week up to the 21st September, 1949.

4. An Exhibition of the works of Progressive Artists' Association, Kashmir was held from the 1st to 7th October 1949. The inaugural ceremony of the Exhibition was performed by Prof: Humayun Kabir, Joint Educational Adviser to the Government of India, Ministry of Education, on the 1st of October 1949.

5. The Society arranged a private view of an Exhibition of paintings and drawings by Mr. Gondhalekar for two days,—9th and 10th October 1949. This was a special show allowed by the Society to Mr. Gondhalekar for holding his exhibition.

6. Exhibition of the staff and students' works of the Model Art Institute, Bombay was opened by Hon'ble Dr. B. V. Keskar, Deputy Minister, Government of India, External Affairs, on the 12th and lasted up to 21st October, 1949.

7. Yawalkar Studio's exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Mrs. Sushila Yawalkar was held from the 3rd to 13th November last. The Hon'ble Mr. N. V. Gadgil, Minister of Works, Mines and Power inaugurated the Exhibition.

8. Exhibition of paintings and drawings by Biswanath Mukerji and Satyen Ghosal was informally opened on the 18th November last and continued for six days. This exhibition was organised in aid of the National Art Gallery Building Fund, — the artists having agreed to contribute 50% of the sale proceeds of their works for the Building Fund of the proposed National Art Gallery.

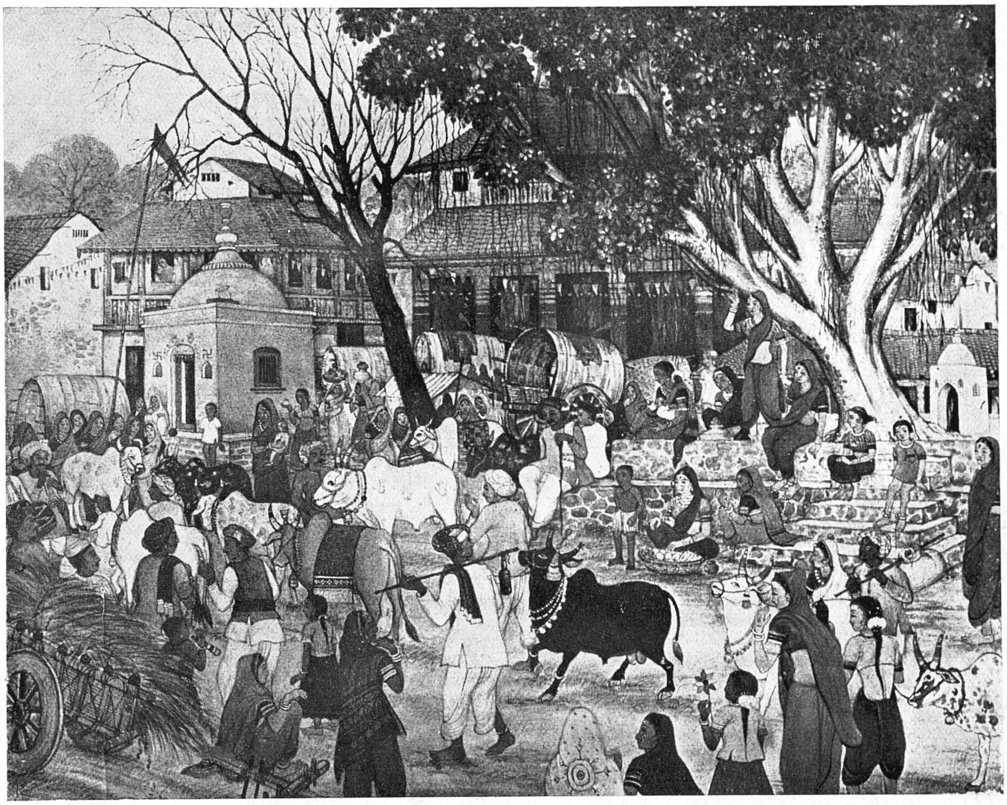
9. A "Group-show" of the works of Abani Sen and Gopal Ghose was opened on Friday the 25th November 1949 by His Excellency Monseur Daniel Levi, French Ambassador. The Exhibition closed on the 7th December last.

10. An Exhibition of paintings and drawings of 'Delhi Group Artists', which is an annual feature with the All - India Fine Arts & Crafts Society, was opened on the 12th December by Dr. Tara Chand, Secretary, Government of India, Ministry of Education. It remained open until the 21st December, 1949. This year about 150 exhibits by 50 artists representing all Schools of Art were on view.

"Village Puja"
By
Sailoz Mukherjea

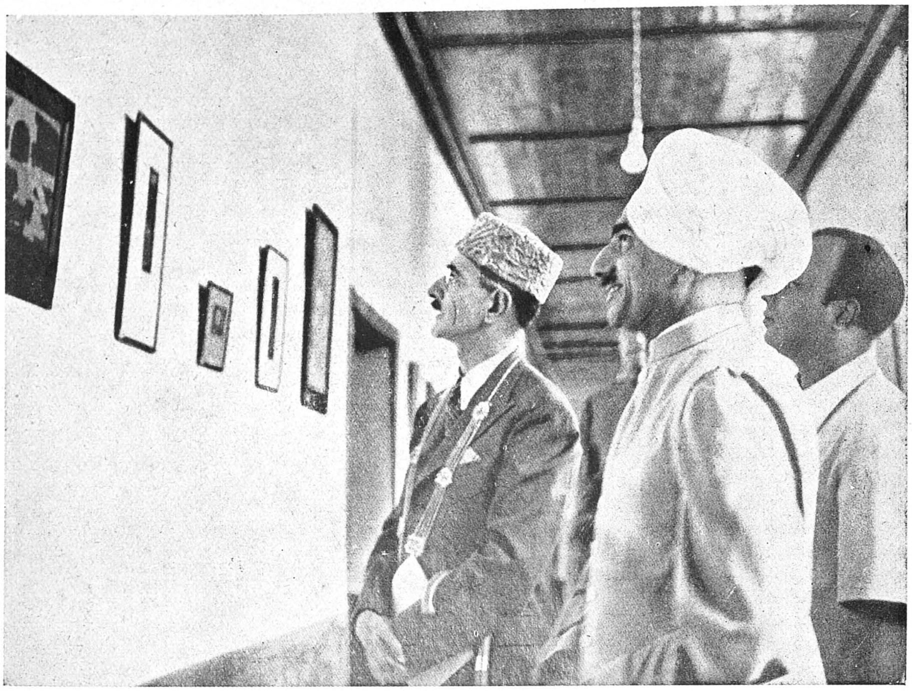
(*From Patiala Collection*)

Indian Art Exhibition,
Kabul

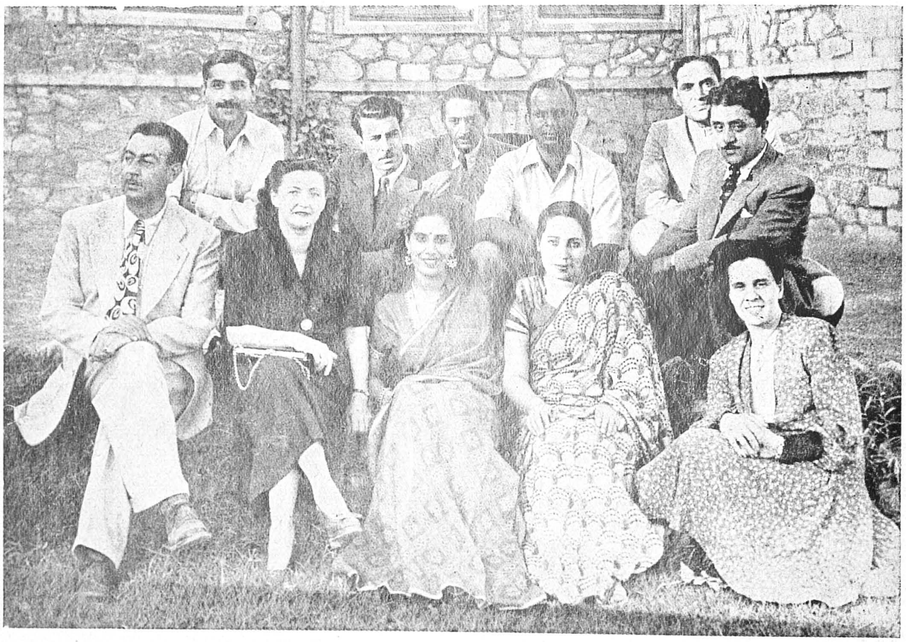


"Bulls Day in Nasik" Kironmoy Dhar

Indian Art Exhibition in Kabul



H. R. H. Shah Wali Khan, H. E. Shri Rupchand and Mr. Anil Roy Choudhury at the Kabul Exhibition



AFGHAN ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION

Front row: Mr. Brechna (President), Madame Brechna, Mrs. Kapoor, Mrs. Puri, Madame Simonne Choukour (Secretary)

Back row: Col. Kapoor, Military Attache, Indian Embassy, Kabul; Mr. Humayun, Mr. Ghausuddin, Mr. Anil Roy Choudhury, Mr. G.L. Puri (Secretary), and Dr. Abdul Choukour Wali

THE CAMERA SOCIETY—

A Camera Society has been organised in Delhi under the auspices of the All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society with the following aims and objects:

Promotion of interest in the art of photography and cinematography in all their aspects by means of discussions, demonstrations and exhibitions.

Setting up of libraries, studios, dark rooms and laboratories for the practical training of members.

Undertaking publications devoted to photography and cinematography in all their aspects.

Setting up ultimately an Academy of Photography on a national level.

The following are the office bearers of the Society:

PRESIDENT :

The Hon'ble Dr. B. V. Keskar, Deputy Minister, External Affairs, Government of India.

VICE-PRESIDENT :

Dr. K. N. Mathur, A. R. P. S.

GOVERNING COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN :	Mr. K. K. Nair.	SECRETARY :	Mr. S. N. R. Chowdhury.
TREASURER :	Mr. B. K. Dilwali.	JOINT-SECRETARIES :	Mr. B. P. Mittra, Mr. R. P. Dhamija.

MEMBERS :

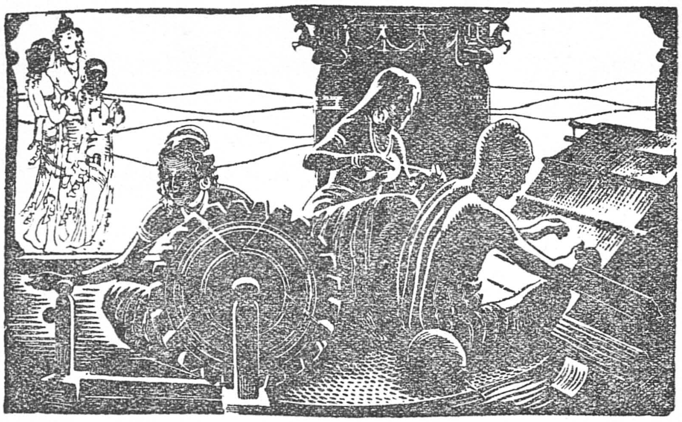
Sardar Surjit Singh Garewal.
F/Lt. S. Mullick.
Capt. S. K. Khoparkar, A. R. P. S.
Mr. T. Kasi Nath, A. R. P. S.
Mrs. Vyaravala.
Mr. N. S. Vaidyanathan.
Mr. V. Y. Ghorpade.
Mr. Ramnik Lal.

The subscription for life membership is Rs. 250. The entrance fee for ordinary membership is Rs. 15 and the annual subscription is Rs. 20, payable in advance during the first week of January every year. The financial year of the Society is the calendar year. Members who join after June 31 in any year need pay only Rs. 10 for the remaining part of the year.

The Society hopes to organise international photographic exhibitions in Delhi and to arrange exhibitions of Indian photographs in foreign countries. An exhibition

of the work of Mr. B. K. Dilwali, a member of the Society, was held at Schoneberg, Berlin, in September last. The exhibition had a good press. " In some photographs the spark of the sun" wrote the *Die Welt* of Hamburg, Berlin, on September 6, "glittering and gleaming like the precious stones which embroider women's costumes is to be seen. Palm trees; the architecture of the Taj Mahal appearing as an exotic miracle; Bombay—the Gateway of India glimmering white and soaring above the water like Venice". The *Telegraf*, Berlin, of September 13 wrote: "The technique is masterly and the connoisseur will certainly appreciate it. The significant factor, however, is the human attitude of this artist". The *Tagesspiegel* of September 5, referred to "the unusual conception" behind many of the photographs.

The Society has made arrangements to receive photos periodically through the International Portfolio circuits.



(A Scene from Gupta Period)

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- SET OF DELHI VIEWS
- BARODA UKILS' SIX SEASONS (under printing)

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